







# MEMOIRS OF AN ARCHITECT



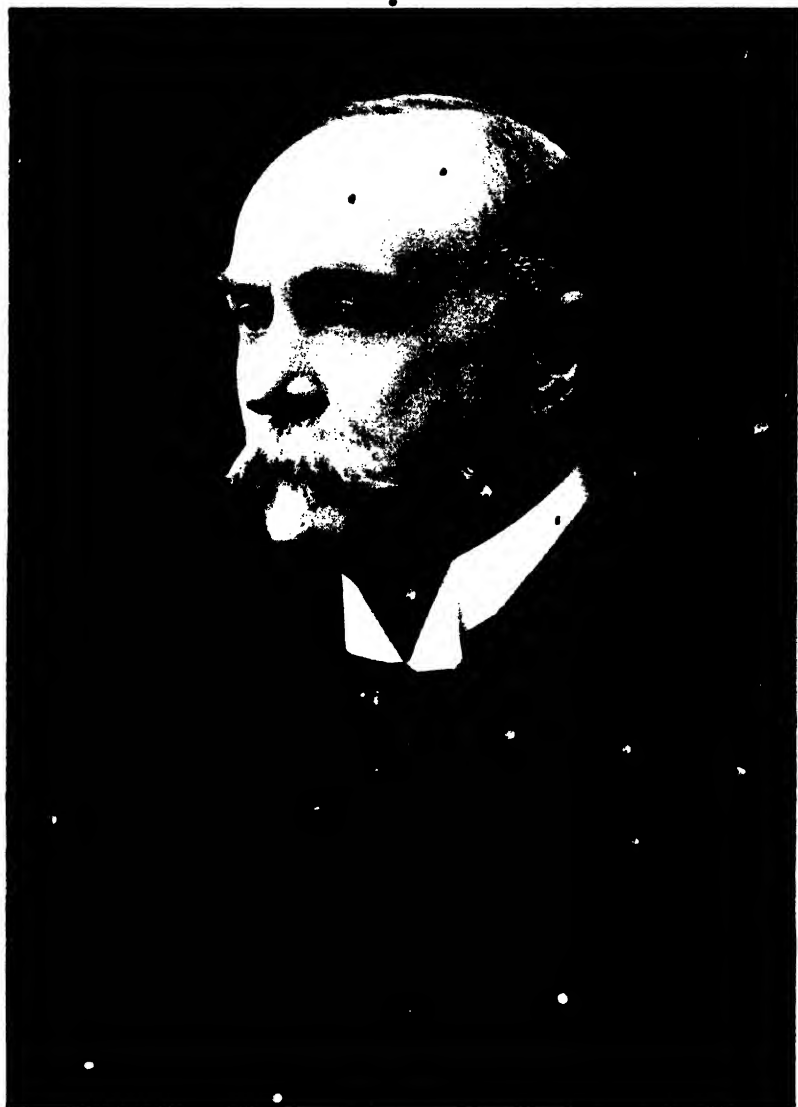


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SIR REGINALD BLOMFIELD, R.A., 1918

# MEMOIRS OF AN ARCHITECT

BY

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**TO MY WIFE**



## PREFACE

IN the following pages I have described more or less typical incidents of my life. These have only a personal interest. The various movements with which from time to time I have been connected have a wider bearing. These, I think, deserve some permanent record, and such light as can be thrown on them by one who has spent much of his life in the fray. Hence these memoirs.

R. B.

POINT HILL, RYE,  
*Aug. 1932*





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## CHAPTER I

Bow—Dartford—The Vicarage, Highgate—Brighton and the School—  
Aldington—Folkestone.

AUTOBIOGRAPHIES and Memoirs are in the fashion to-day, and perhaps that should be a sufficient reason for not venturing into those dangerous waters. On the other hand, Memoirs are often very good reading, and to oneself, at any rate, it is interesting to overhaul one's past, and to take an opportunity not to be found elsewhere of delivering one's opinions on things in general. I think also that there should be some record of certain important but half-forgotten movements with which I happen to have been rather closely connected. I cannot say, in the words on the old sundial, *Non numero horas nisi serenas*, because, though I have been fortunate in a peaceful life at home, outside it I have taken part in a good many excellent fights, and resemble the stormy petrel, which, though an innocent and harmless bird, appears to enjoy itself most when the waves are highest and the stormy winds do blow. Much of one's life is determined by the circumstances in which one finds oneself, and I shall endeavour to set out those circumstances and my reaction to them with all the candour and honesty that I can command.

I was born on December 20, 1856, in the Vicarage at Bow, or Nymet Tracey, in Devonshire, a little village some twelve miles west of Exeter. Bow Church, by the way, is said to have been built by William de Traci, one of the murderers of Thomas à Becket, in 1170. My parents were George John Blomfield, M.A., of Exeter College, Oxford, afterwards Rector and Rural Dean of Aldington in Kent, and Isabella, second daughter of Charles



James Blomfield, Bishop, of London, 1828 to 1856. On both sides I come from an old East Anglian family, of which I have given particulars in *A Suffolk Family*. The name Blomfield (spelt with one *o*, but pronounced with two—Bloomfield) is “Blomevil”, “a knightly family which held the Barony of Rye or Rhye in Normandy”, settled in England at the time of the Conquest, and in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as “Blomvile”, held the Manor of Newton Flotman and other properties in Norfolk and Suffolk.<sup>1</sup> In the seventeenth century East Anglia was almost entirely on the Parliament side, and I only find one member of the family who was a Royalist, William Blomfield, who was nominated for the order of the Royal Oak, an order which never came into existence. I have in my possession one of those very rare little silver locket which were made at the time of the Execution of Charles I and given to “twelve loyal gentlemen”. The locket is shaped like a heart,  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. by  $\frac{7}{8}$  in. by  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. Inside is a beautiful little oval relief portrait of Charles I, in silver, measuring  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. by  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. On the back of the locket, outside, is engraved “Quae temperil (?)<sup>2</sup> a lacrimis. January 30, 1648”, and below is an eyedropping tiny tears. On the front of the locket is engraved a heart transfixed by two arrows, and above “I live and dy On the inside of the front is engraved— in loyaltic.”

“Prepared be to follow me.—C. R.” This locket belonged to my great-

grandfather, Charles Blomfield, of Bury St. Edmunds. I know nothing of its history before that date in the latter part of the eighteenth century, but it may have come down to him from William Blomfield the Royalist, of Little Stonham in Suffolk. William Blomfield was directly descended from Robert de Blomevile, who was living at

<sup>1</sup> See *A Suffolk Family*, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> *Temperil* is unintelligible unless it is an engraver's mistake for *temperies*, “what peace from tears,” a variation on Horace's “quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus?”

Newton Flotman in Norfolk in 1190. Another member of the family, on the other hand, Edward Blomfield, was brother-in-law of Dowsing, "the Iconoclast", who went about East Anglia smashing old glass and breaking up graved and carved work with all the zeal of the Hebrew prophets hewing down the groves of Baal. As a House the Blomfields began to fail soon after the Restoration of Charles II, and I attribute the disintegration of the family to the fact that with one or two exceptions the Blomfields were all on the Puritan side. This engrained Puritan, or perhaps one should say rebellious, instinct may account for certain abnormal elements of a rather uncertain character.

• When I was born my mother was very dangerously ill, and the family doctor had to give the whole of his attention to saving my mother's life. I was handed over to the care of a good Devonshire girl, who became so fond of her charge that when my father very rightly wished to correct me she made ready to go for him with a carving-knife; but as I could only have been a year old or less, I knew nothing of these things except what my father told me later. In 1857 we left Bow, and my father became Vicar of Dartford in Kent. It is here that my first conscious memories begin. The Vicarage seemed to me a large house with stables and a spacious garden and kitchen garden. There was a fine big lawn on which my father taught me and my brothers the rudiments of cricket. A high wall ran along the east side separating the garden from a public footpath and the river Darent. The garden side of the house was covered by a splendid wistaria, and along the east side there was a shrubbery haunted by many frogs, with a hedge and a stream on the farther side. On the north side there was an entrance gate, with the stables to the left and a kitchen garden to the right. On the walls of this garden, facing south, there were some very fine apricots, and one summer's day I was unable to resist the temptation of these apricots and ate three. My father had watched and counted his apricots, and missing three asked

if I had taken them. I offered the ingenuous reply that the pig had eaten them, but as the pig was in his sty and would have had to jump over the palings and climb up the wall, this clearly would not do, and I was duly and properly spanked. The only other delinquency of childhood that I recollect was flying into an ungovernable rage, standing on the first-floor landing of the stairs, and hurling out every word of abuse I could muster at things in general. My mother, the gentlest of women, merely let me shriek myself out and then talked to me about it.

About this time I nearly lost my left eye. Just outside the entrance gate there was a large flour-mill of weatherboards painted white, with an old-fashioned forecourt and house attached, inhabited by a stout and kindly miller of the old school, a Mr. Hards. My brother Charles<sup>1</sup> was potting birds with his catapult on the other side of the millpond, and let fly just as I came out of the gates. He landed me on the left eyebrow, narrowly missing my eye—my first casualty. As a child I suffered a good deal from earache, and from a peculiar kind of nightmare. I dreamed that I was lost among huge masses without form and void, that yet seemed to be ever thrusting me down into infinite space, vague, mysterious, and the more terrifying because in my dream there was nothing by which I could identify these unkindly powers. Perhaps it was an early attack of blood pressure or I may have been sleeping on my head. However, these enemies left me at an early age, and I must have been a happy child with kind parents and relations, and a large family of brothers and sisters to fight and play with in that dear old Vicarage garden. Some years ago I visited Dartford in connection with a war memorial, and after an interval of some sixty years I was surprised to see how small everything seemed. The house seemed to have shrunk to about half its size, and the garden with it. I

<sup>1</sup> Major-General Charles James Blomfield, C.B., D.S.O., who was severely wounded at Spion Kop in command of the 2nd Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers, and afterwards commanded divisions at Exeter, Mhow, Peshawar and Colchester.

doubt the wisdom of going back to the haunts of one's childhood; one's cherished illusions are shattered and one is left with the empty shell.

When I was seven years old the time had come for some serious schooling. An uncle of mine, Prebendary Charles Dalton, who had married my mother's elder sister Mary, was Vicar of Highgate, with a family of three sons and two daughters. It seemed an excellent idea that I should go to the Vicarage and attend Highgate School with my three cousins. The school was then, I believe, under Dr. Dyne. I have no recollection of it, but a vivid memory of the sour bullaces that I used to pick in the Vicarage garden, also of a certain service in Highgate Church which seemed to my infant mind to be unduly prolonged. In order to show my resentment at this injustice I kicked my cousin Edith<sup>1</sup> hard on the shin. She, being a kind-hearted girl, understood the situation and said nothing about it so far as I was aware, but by this time my violent ways had roused unfavourable comment. It was felt that the arrangement did not work, and I was returned home with this character, "Reginald has the strength of Hercules and the temper of the Devil", a remarkable description of a boy of seven, set in the company of an uncle and aunt and four or five cousins all older than himself. The fact was that my aunt, though an excellent lady, was rather censorious; my uncle was a rather sanctimonious old person whom I never liked, and I was a sturdy, hot-tempered, red-headed little ruffian who by this time was always called "Jack" on account of a fancied resemblance to John Bull.

My next recollection is being sent in 1865 to a fashionable private school in Brighton kept by a Mrs. X—. The school laid itself out for the sons of noblemen and persons of opulence, but I was the son of a parson, and there were no younger sons to follow me. I am reminded to-day, November 15, 1931, of one of these boys by seeing in the papers the announcement of his death at the age of seventy-

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards married to the Rev. Thomas Papillon, Fellow and Tutor of New College, and later Rector of Writtle in Essex.

xix. I knew that boy well at Mrs. X——'s, and recollect him as a fat little fellow with bright eyes, who received letters stamped with a brilliant crest in blue and gold, to the admiration of all his fellows. He was a cheerful, good-tempered boy, and there were other quite nice lads in no way responsible for the favoured treatment they received from Mrs. X——. My memories of that lady's establishment are wholly unfavourable. The lady herself was a stout, rather handsome person, with an aquiline nose, hard blue eyes and thin lips, and I still recall her in a rustling, purple silk gown and crinoline, several gold chains, and a white lace square on her head. She was typical of the worst kind of Victorian, and a horrible snob, without any sense of humour, or sporting instincts. We used all to have dinner in the middle of the day, and I recollect a school dinner at which there was a haunch of venison, sent no doubt by some noble patron. A kindly maid had given me a plate of this venison. Mrs. X——'s eagle eye detected the mistake and at once ordered the maid to recover the plate. Directly I heard this order, though the venison seemed to me rather nasty and not nearly as nice as mutton, I attacked it with enthusiastic courage, and though I nearly choked, I managed to gobble down a good part of it before my plate was removed. I suppose I was about ten years old at the time, quite sharp enough to see the injustice of the proceeding and to resent it. Older people make a mistake in supposing that their actions are not noted and duly sized up by their juniors.

On another occasion, when we were walking in file to the playing-field, I picked up half a crown and in the joy of my heart showed it to my neighbour. The news somehow trickled through to Mrs. X——. That odious person made me put it in the plate next Sunday—another hypocritical injustice to a hopeful youth. The lady's husband, a grizzled old creature with a Newgate fringe, used to go up to London every day on some business of his own, and only used to return in the evening, when it appeared that his principal business was to thrash any boys as required. When the operation

was necessary, Mr. X——, Mrs. X—— and one of the masters stood at the end of the dining-room, and the culprit was sent to fetch a whip from a cupboard in which boys who had riding lessons kept their whips. I received sixteen thrashings in one term, and the horrible old man used to lay on and spare not, while Mrs. X—— listened to the yells of the victim with unruffled equanimity. I mentioned this to my father in after years, and he said that, had he known it, he would have blown up the school. But boys, English boys at any rate, keep their sorrows to themselves. Mrs. X——'s report to my people was that I had "great capacity for good and evil". Perhaps she was trying to drive out the evil; but I recollect that I looked forward to the nights, because then I would dream that I was away from this detestable school and at home with my people.

My only other recollection of Mrs. X——'s school is learning to swim in Brill's baths, where a fat old man in a striped blue-and-white jersey, used to teach us, and I still recollect the terror that the thick green water, and the strange noises of the circular covered-in bath, used to create in my childish mind. However, the corpulent old person did teach me to swim, and this saved me when I fell into Folkestone harbour one summer evening when I was taking shots at the sea-gulls with my catapult. My brother C. J. directed me to a ladder, up which I climbed, none the worse, and still holding my catapult. When I appeared in my dripping clothes in the dining-room at home, my parents told me that I should be thankful for my escape. To me the whole thing seemed just a matter of course. Swimming was about the only thing that I learnt at Mrs. X——'s school. On one occasion I won a prize, but for some reason unknown the prize was given not to me but to her younger son, who afterwards became a well-known journalist and was in fact an excellent fellow.

The only redeeming feature I can recollect is the kindness of one of the masters, who was said to have been a

cavalry officer in the Prussian Army. Anyhow, a cavalry sword hung in his room, and he did undoubtedly translate some of Uhland's poems exceedingly well. How a man of his ability and attractive personality could find himself at Mrs. X——'s school I cannot imagine. He was not there long, and probably became an assistant master to fill up time. Apart from this, my recollection of the four years I spent at that school is one of rankling injustice. They taught me nothing, and when my father took me to Winchester to try for a scholarship I failed, partly owing to somnolence due to eating too much duck and green peas at a mid-day dinner, and partly owing to the total absence of any grounding in the rudiments of scholarship.

In 1868 my father left Dartford and proceeded to the living of Aldington in East Kent. He had done admirable work in Dartford, and I have the handsome eighteenth-century silver claret jug and salver which was presented to him on leaving: "In grateful remembrance of his able and honourable discharge of duty during eleven years as vicar of Dartford". My father was an able man, with a quick temper and a ready sense of humour, who loved a scrap, *gaudia certaminis*, as he used to say, but he was a generous adversary, in many ways a typical Englishman of an older school. He left Dartford in excellent order for Bowlby, his successor, who had as his curate Randall Davidson, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. At Aldington my father found a large, disorderly straggling village, once a celebrated haunt of smugglers, and in close touch with the smuggler's run from Dymchurch beach across Romney marsh by Newchurch, Ham Street and westward through the Weald. From time immemorial smuggling had been the inner tradition of Aldington. Old Rogers, the parish clerk and sexton, who was over sixty in 1870, recollected being taken as a boy to see the last Aldington smuggler hung at Maidstone, when the whole village journeyed there to see the event.

There had been no resident Squire since the sixteenth century, and no resident Rector within the memory of man.

Henry VIII, or rather Warham, had given the living to Erasmus in 1514, but at the request of Erasmus the living was given to Richard Masters subject to a pension of £20 a year to Erasmus. Richard Masters took an active part in the fraud and conspiracy of "the Nun of Kent", Elizabeth Barton, a native of Aldington, and was executed at Tyburn in 1534, with five mendicant friars and "the poor unlearned wench", Elizabeth Barton, as she described herself before her execution. The Rectory of Aldington went with the Rectory of Smeeth, and old Dr. Knatchbull, who held them both, lived at Smeeth, and kept a curate to do duty at Aldington. There was no Rectory, and the Church was in a derelict condition, dirty, untidy and uncared for. My father had to build the Rectory, restore the Church and reduce a wild and turbulent village to some sort of order, and before he resigned, after twenty-five years' service as Rector and Rural Dean, he had successfully dealt with all three problems.

From 1868 to 1872, when the Rectory was being built, we lived in Priory Gardens, Folkestone, just south of the old Parish Church. In those days Folkestone was a very attractive place. The Lees extended no farther west than Clifton Gardens. The cricket ground was somewhere out between the present cemetery and the foot of Caesar's Camp. Cheriton was about two miles out of Folkestone, a pleasant country walk all the way, and the Folkestone cricket week was held on Sandgate Plain, where I recollect seeing all the Graces play, Frank Penn and other heroes of sixty years ago. In those days Folkestone was a place with an individuality and society of its own, and it still retained a faint suggestion of an older tradition. Now it has become almost an extension of London, with its great hotels, and its suburbs straggling out to the foot of the hills in the north and to Sandgate in the west. Here we lived very happily till we moved to Aldington, twelve miles to the west, and it was at Folkestone that, through the wise thought of my grandmother, I was given riding lessons on a little bay pony, under Berry the riding-master. When I



began hunting some thirty years later, I had to learn to ride all over again, but I do not think I could have made anything of it if I had not had those riding-lessons as a small boy at Folkestone. It was at Folkestone, too, that my vague idea of being a sailor was effectually dissipated. One Easter my father took my brothers and me by sea to Dover for a grand review—but the sea was very rough, far too rough for my visions of a second Nelson.

## CHAPTER II

Haileybury College—E. H. Bradby, F. B. Butler—Bradby's Methods—A Typical Fight—Cricket and Football then and now—Serious Illness.

I WAS now twelve years old, and my father sent me to Haileybury in 1869. My brother Charles had gone there the year before, and my elder brother Edward was already at Charterhouse, then under Haig-Brown. Haileybury College, the School that is, was founded not very long after the Indian Mutiny. The old East Indian College built in 1806 was closed in 1858, and the old buildings surrounding what was said to be the biggest quad in England were standing empty. I well recollect those gaunt yellow brick and stone buildings, with flat slate roofs, and the Clock Tower (or rather turret above a pediment) in the centre of the west side. We used to have famous slides downhill from the Clock Tower to the entrance to the Great School opposite, some ninety to one hundred yards. The Great School was on the east side, between the Dining Hall and the Masters' Common Room on the north side, and the Chapel and Head-master's House on the south. On either side of the Great School there were paved paths covered with galvanized iron roofs, called by courtesy "The Cloisters", and it was in one of these cloisters that, just before going into Chapel, I once began a very promising scrap with Bingham Turner, afterwards Fellow of Jesus, but we were stopped by a master, Hart, afterwards Head-master of Sedbergh, who suggested that going into Chapel was not the place or the time to start a stand-up fight. The east façade was all in Portland stone, a fine design by Wilkins (the architect of the National Gallery) in the Greek

manner of the beginning of the nineteenth century. The old Great School was pulled down to make room for the existing Chapel, which was designed by my uncle, Sir Arthur Blomfield, in 1874-5, and was actually being built in my last year at Haileybury. Wilkins also designed the entrance portico at the end of the long chestnut avenue. The buildings have been a good deal injured by subsequent alterations and additions, but as I recollect them prior to any alterations, there was a certain grim efficiency about them which I still think of with respect. Moreover, its walls had once harboured the great Anglo-Indians, Elphinstone, Lawrence, Colvin, Edmonston and Trevelyan. My future father-in-law, Henry Burra, of Rye, Sussex, was actually among the last lot of East India Company students. He won the hurdles and the long jump in the College sports, and took the gold medal for Sanskrit in 1857.

Soon after 1860—I forget the exact date—it occurred to the nobility and gentry of Hertfordshire, among whom was my great-uncle, George Becher Blomfield, Rector of Stevenage and Canon of Chester, that this large empty building was admirably adapted for a new public school, which should provide education for the sons of officers, clergymen, professional men and impecunious gentlemen, at about half the cost of the old-established public schools. The first beginnings of the school were, I have always understood, rather a rough-and-tumble affair. The first Head-master, Arthur Grey Butler, Fellow of Oriel, was a charming person, but not the man to ride the whirlwind and direct the storm, and on his resignation and return to Oxford, E. H. Bradby, an old Rugby man, then second master at Harrow, was appointed to succeed him. I have always regarded Bradby as the greatest Head-master of his time. Out of rather uncertain material he made Haileybury into a first-rate public school, and so it continued till, much to the regret of everyone, he resigned, on the plea that his strength was no longer equal to the demands of the Head-mastership of a great public school.

We all stood in fear of Bradby. He was of a sturdy and compact figure, with rather small, sharp blue eyes and a flaming red beard, and he used to stump about the grounds in a black frock coat buttoned tightly over his chest, and a tall stovepipe hat, a terror to evil-doers, but a just man, with a saving grace of humour, and absolutely fearless. If he thought a thing was wrong, he went for it without fear or favour, and underneath a formidable exterior he concealed a kind heart, and anxiety to do the best for those in his charge. His enemies, the evil-doers, called him Judas because of his red beard, but those who got to know him, as I did myself in my later days at Haileybury and afterwards, found in him a wise and considerate sympathy, that steadily widened and mellowed as the years went by. He also possessed an extraordinary power of drawing out the best that was in one, by question and suggestion in the true Socratic manner.

As the result of the entrance examination I was placed in Lower Middle I, under the Rev. F. B. Butler, afterwards my house-master. In my early years I always thought of Butler as Dr. Syntax, not that he was in the least like him, except in his unworldliness and the fact that he rode a queer old cob, and he used to amuse us by composing pompous epitaphs in the approved manner of the eighteenth century, such as may be seen in the Abbey Church at Bath. Butler was an Oxford man, a sound scholar and an enthusiastic antiquary, rather good-looking, with fair hair and short close-cut side whiskers. He was kindly and affectionate, but very sensitive, rather out of his element in a school such as Haileybury, and I fear that in his latter days he was not very happy there, owing to his aloofness and the lack of understanding of a younger generation of masters. His people and mine were friends, and he was always kind and most patient with me, talking to me about my ungovernable temper instead of clouting me over the head.

I vegetated at the bottom of Lower Middle I for two or three terms, and in the course of three years wandered

up through Upper Middle I and Upper Middle II, till at the age of fifteen to sixteen I found myself in the Lower Fifth, knowing little or nothing, having started badly from Mrs. X——'s deplorable school, and so far having taken little interest in my school work, and doing as little of it as I could. On the other hand, I was keenly interested in natural history, and used to wander about on Hertford Heath catching butterflies. I was far keener on purple hair-streaks than on past participles. For a time I had a pet slow-worm, and my ambition was to possess a jackdaw, but I never had enough money to buy one; sixpence a week was the school allowance, and the scanty sum I brought from home did not run to two and sixpence, the current price of a jackdaw in 1872. On the other hand, I read a good deal of poetry, and I remember the surprise of the master in charge of the House library when I took out Morris's *Earthly Paradise*, which had been published not long before, and also his *Life and Death of Jason*, and thoroughly enjoyed them both. However, my father had not sent me to school to catch bugs and beetles or even to read poetry, and when I was nearly sixteen he wrote to me quite firmly to say that if I did not work, and my reports did not improve, he would take me away and I should end my days as a clerk in a post-office. My father was, I knew, a man of his word. I was extremely depressed, but my brother told me not to be an ass and to buck up and work, and I acted on his advice. I set to work for all I was worth; came out head of the Lower Fifth, did the same in the Upper Fifth in the following term, and went straight through the Lower Sixth into the Upper Sixth, in which form I spent the last two years of my stay at Haileybury, under E. H. Bradby himself. I have still the four prizes that I won in four consecutive terms, bound in morocco, a brilliant magenta (the school colour) with the arms stamped in gold. The titles are interesting: Stephen's *Ecclesiastical Biography*, Wornum's *Epochs of Painting*, Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine* and Donaldson's *Theatre of the Greeks*.

Bradby used to stimulate the dawning intelligence of

boys by cunning questions, and by rousing their interest in wider subjects than gerunds and supines and aorists, and for the first time, under his guidance, I began to get a glimpse of what a Humanist might be. Though I was in the Upper Sixth, Bradby let me off Greek and Latin verse, for which I had no sort of aptitude, and allowed me to join the class of English literature and read Shakespeare. He used to ask the Sixth to dine with him from time to time, and would talk to us in the most delightfully easy way on all sorts of subjects, and that very charming lady his wife put one at ease from one's first shy entrance into the drawing-room. It was in the Head-master's house, by the way, that I first made acquaintance with the work of that wild and desperate man of genius, Giovanni Battista Piranesi. Bradby told us of some drawing by Piranesi of an interminable winding staircase, up which a solitary man was for ever climbing and never coming to the top. I have never come across this drawing, but there are suggestions of the idea in the *Carcere d'Invenzione*. It was Bradby also who first called my attention to Flaxman's *Outlines of Homer and Aeschylus*. There were copies of this in the Sixth Form library, and many a wet afternoon I spent poring over these drawings. They swept me far away from my surroundings, but somehow I never linked them up with the classics I was reading in form.

Life at Haileybury in those days was rough and ready. We slept in dormitories, cut up into cubicles about 9 ft. by 6 ft. with wood partitions, and red baize curtains in front, ranged along both sides of the open space down the centre, in which stood the washing-stands. There was a fireplace at each end, but no other method of heating. With the exception of a small boarding-house for delicate boys, run by James Rhoades,<sup>1</sup> master of the Lower Fifth, and Hailey House, a separate establishment for boys in the lower forms, under that formidable person the Rev. E. H. Walford, we had all our meals in Hall. The food was abundant, but coarse and of inferior quality. During

<sup>1</sup> James Rhoades the poet. He afterwards went to Sherborne School.

the whole time I was at Haileybury, I seldom could eat the meat provided, and not very often the puddings. As I was a growing boy I was usually hungry, though I do not know that one was any the worse for this, for Haileybury was a healthy place, and boys usually over-eat. A steward was in charge of the Hall and Buttery, an enormous elderly man with a huge chest, round which he wore a black coat rather like a soldier's tunic, tightly buttoned up to his neck, with a little wisp of a black tie, tied in a bow. He wore a top-hat, and looked like a prison-warder, or a retired heavy-weight boxer; but in spite of his terrifying appearance, he was a kind-hearted man; and I recollect his once giving me half a loaf at the buttery hatch when I was more than usually ravenous.

Fights usually came off after Chapel in one of the form rooms. There was a grand fight between a stocky lad named Marsh and a long, lean, wiry boy Merivale 3. It was held in Upper Middle II class-room, which was on the first floor. A few privileged boys filled the sides of the class-room; the rest of us stood outside in the quad, and as the form room had large wide windows and was well lit up, we small boys enjoyed the thrill of seeing Marsh and Merivale 3 punching each other's heads from 9 P.M. till 10, when they could no longer see where to hit each other, and as lights were out at 10 the fight terminated. Next morning the two heroes appeared in Chapel with faces out of shape and all sorts of colours, but nobody took any notice. Yes—it was a hard school, and when it did not kill outright, one was probably all the better for its strenuous discipline.

About the same time that I took to working in form, I began to take an interest in the school and its games. I began to play cricket and football, and in due course got into the Eleven and the Fifteen. E. P. Ash, an old Cambridge blue and a beautiful bat, taught me how to cut and slash in front of cover. He also taught me the old square-leg hit, now long extinct, in which you kept a firm stance with the right foot, advanced the left leg as far out as you could, and swept the half volley or even a good length ball

on the leg stump over the umpire's head. I saw, in a recent number of *The Times*, some records of great square-leg hits. In 1877, Cambridge *v.* Yorkshire, "the Hon. Edward Lyttelton twice lifted Hill to square-leg for six into the cornfield". In 1876, playing for Sussex, J. B. Cotterill "hit Street to square-leg right out of the ground, 120 yards from hit to pitch". In the match Gloucester *v.* Notts at Clifton, in 1876, there were four hits for 6 and three for 7, "all to square-leg", and most of them by one or other of the Graces. I recollect catching Freeman Thomas (now Lord Willingdon, Viceroy of India) on the boundary of the Ashford Ground in Kent, off a spanking square-leg hit. That hit is one of the lost glories of cricket, and I believe the only man ~~who~~ makes it now is Woolley of Kent. All our other first-class batsmen either politely glide the ball to leg, or play it with their pads, which is not batting at all. They might just as well kick the ball. I have made many a boundary off that stroke, and in my day we were taught that a cricket bat is intended for hitting the ball as hard as God will let you, and not merely for its passive reception. In other words, we were taught to go for the bowling and not to refuse it or play it with one's legs. I attribute much of the dullness of modern first-class cricket to the substitution of caninness for the old aggressive spirit; indeed, it is far more amusing to watch village cricket, when the blacksmith slogs the ball out of the ground with a total disregard of the conventions of first-class cricket, than to watch one of our well-known amateurs refusing the ball, and never lifting his bat above his knee. The same tendency to play tricks with the bowling instead of going for it is shown in the practice of playing back to good-length balls, instead of driving them hard past the bowler; and I think the inimitable skill of Ranjitsinhji has had an unfortunate influence on English cricket, in that it has led our batsmen to attempt methods alien both to their temperament and physique. The Indian's methods require an Indian eye and wrist. In cricket, as in other things, attack is often the soundest form of defence.



Last May (1932) I saw the Indians play the M.C.C. at Lord's. On the first day, in spite of a bad light, Captain C. N. Nayudu, a tall spare man, as straight as a young pine-tree, hit up a splendid century, including two slashes to the boundary over cover, off successive balls of Mr. Peebles, and a glorious sixer off Mr. Jupp, which landed high up on the wall of the building to the south of the scoring-box, and bounded back over the people's heads on to the ground. That was cricket as it should be played—a gallant game. On the second day I went again, but, alas, two eminent members of the M.C.C. were poking about, solemnly playing half volleys and long hops. Instead of hitting the ball, they spent most of the time beating the ground with their bats, as if to show the crowd that the wicket was really difficult—in fact, it looked extremely easy. In thirty minutes these gentlemen scratched up 15 runs, the most deplorable exhibition of modern “first-class cricket” that I have ever seen. If this is cricket, then cricket is not worth playing. Oh for one hour of C. I. Thornton, of Gilbert Jessop, of that mighty hitter Bonner the Australian, of anyone, not excepting the village blacksmith, who has the heart to open his shoulders and go for the bowling.

I was in the school Fifteen in 1875, the first year in which Fifteen a side was substituted for the old Twenty a side, and that change was the beginning out of which has grown the magnificent game that modern Rugby Union football has since become, though, as an old player, I regret to see that this too is being spoilt by over-specialization and too much cunning, and the development of the winger, who in nine cases out of ten seems to me to be off-side. On the other hand, the old-fashioned game, when the forwards pushed and kicked each other without any system at all, was absurdly unscientific; the redeeming features in it were the hand-off and the low tackle. I played full-back for the school, and was a useful place and drop kick. We seldom punted in the seventies, and there is record of a drop-kick by Leonard Stokes, the famous Blackheath back, who dropped a goal at Oxford from

fifteen yards on the farther side of the centre line. In 1875 I was a long wiry boy weighing some nine and a half stone, and my favourite tackle was to dive for the legs of the man with the ball. It seems some of the members of teams playing the school did not like this method, and Bradby, who in his younger days had played full-back for Rugby, called my attention to this, and pointed out that fat and weighty men did not like being brought down with a thump; but I explained to the Head-master that this was the only way I could stop them. Bradby's eyes twinkled, and he did not press the point.

The last match I played at Haileybury was played in a snowstorm. I stood shivering at full-back for an hour and a quarter, while the forwards rolled about in the middle of the ground, and that evening, being Head of my House, determined to have a good hot bath. Having thoroughly boiled myself, I returned to my dormitory along a stone-flagged passage exposed to a bitter east wind. I woke up in the night with a consuming thirst, drank a jugful of water, went to breakfast in "Elysium" (a room reserved for the head prefects) feeling like nothing at all, and then went over to the Sick house, and as far as I recollect became unconscious, with an acute attack of inflammation of the lungs. I imagine that it must have been a very near thing whether I pulled through. I was prayed for in Chapel, and after some three weeks in bed was sufficiently recovered to be sent home; but I had grown one and a quarter inches, and was terribly weak; in fact, I think that serious illness retarded my physical development for some twenty years. I never reached my full strength and right weight for my height till I was nearly forty. I was very well nursed, and people were very kind to me. Mrs. Bradby used to read to me *The Mill on the Floss*, old F. B. Butler read me *Scenes from Clerical Life*, and there were others who came to see me. I think they felt it was rather sad that I should be snuffed out at the end of my last term at Haileybury, when I was second in the school, head of my House, in the Eleven and Fifteen, and had won a leaving exhibition

at the school and a scholarship at Exeter College, Oxford.

I used to look back with mixed feelings to the seven years I spent at Haileybury. The first half of the time I was out of my element: the treatment I had received at Mrs. X——'s school had driven me in on myself, and I was then a shy, sometimes not very happy boy, who did not mix freely with other boys; in fact, I was rather like a nervous colt who had been knocked about by a brute of a groom. Then when I made a *volte-face* in my attitude, and set to work with dogged persistence, I again found myself a little out of touch with the casual, happy-go-lucky boys who enjoyed themselves in their own way, and managed to shuffle through with a bare minimum of work. The very strong sense of duty which then possessed me must, I think, have made me too serious and too much in earnest to hit it off quite comfortably with the average chterful boy. My own naturally lively disposition had at any rate for the time been thrust into the background by that detestable school at Brighton, and I never really began to find myself and to enjoy life fully till I went to Oxford.

## CHAPTER III

Oxford—Exhibition and Scholarship, Exeter College—Some Exeter Men: The Dons, Tozer, Jackson, Ray Lankester, Price, Bywater, Pelham—Mods.; Greats—Pater, Jowett—The Value of Oxford.

As I was the third son of a country rector with a large family, there was little chance of my going to Oxford without the help of a scholarship. My eldest brother, Edward, was up at Trinity, and my second brother, Charles, was at Sandhurst. It was up to me to help, and by a great effort I won one of the two leaving exhibitions at Haileybury. About half-way through the term I retired from the Eleven, and devoted my afternoons to going through the mornings' lessons again. Better scholars than I were in the field, such as my old friend Bingham Turner; but by sheer hard work I won one of the exhibitions, with A. G. S. Gibson, the Head of the school, who proceeded to Oxford with a scholarship at Corpus and afterwards became a Missionary bishop in Africa, a man of heroic devotion to what he conceived to be his duty. Haileybury, however, was a poor school; its exhibitions were only worth £50 per annum, and I had now to win a scholarship. My first attempt was rather unlucky. I entered in a field of about eighty, for scholarships at Oriel, Trinity and Merton. Out of this field ten candidates were selected for the final heat, and finding my name was not among the ten posted at Oriel, I went back to Haileybury. When, however, my father wrote to enquire how I had done, one of the Dons, I think it was A. G. Butler, the old Head-master of Haileybury, wrote back to say that, owing to a most unfortunate clerical error, another name had been substituted for mine. It certainly was unfortunate, as the subject of the

final paper was Greek Prose, in which I afterwards took a first in Greats.

I then went in for a Stapledon scholarship at Exeter College, which I won, beating A. W. Upcott, afterwards Head-master of Christ's Hospital. The net result of my labours was £110 per annum, about half the amount of such school scholarships as those of the Merchant Taylors at St. John's, but in those days enough with another £100 from my father to carry me comfortably through my four years at Oxford. I declined the invitation to join the College wine clubs, the Adelphi and the Falernian, to both of which I was elected, but otherwise I lived the usual life of the undergraduate, was Secretary to the College Cricket Club, played full-back for the College, played in the Seniors in my third year, and, except for a blunder in a College match, might have got my blue as full-back, as in my third year I played full-back for Oxford five times out of the eight matches. Exeter was playing New College, and the ball came to me at full-back. I duly gathered it and made the usual kick to touch, but unfortunately the ball was wet and heavy, and instead of going into touch it landed in the stomach of Fowler, the Oxford captain, a fourteen-stone man with a remarkable turn of speed for thirty yards. The ball rebounded behind me, from Fowler's person, and Fowler, who was charging down the field, went on and got his touch-down before I could turn round and get to him.

It is curious how these little things stay in one's memory. I recollect a slash in front of cover on the Merton ground; a goal dropped out of a broken-up scrummage from beyond the half-way line;<sup>1</sup> having my eyebrow cut to the bone by a blundering forward who butted into me in a College match,

<sup>1</sup> The drop-kick of my life was made in the dining-room of 39 Woburn Square after I was married. I had been wrestling in vain with Bradshaw, and, in a final outburst, took a left foot drop-kick which sent Bradshaw flying hard and low the whole length of the room till he crashed into the window, and stuck there in the glass and the red silk Liberty curtain. That was a kick worthy of Leonard Stokes or of Morkel, the full-back of the Springboks.

and having it sown up in Keble Lodge; upsetting in a canoe on the Cherwell in trying to ram another; my flat bath careering down the stairs of the Tower over the entrance to the College and so into the Quad in an attempt to repel boarders; glorious running headers from the steep river-bank below Great Marlow, when we rowed down the Thames from Oxford to London—little incidents of no importance, yet pleasant to remember long after one has passed them. Exeter was undoubtedly a cheerful place. I recollect C——, a sturdy, fighting Rugby man, brought into College with a broken head from a Town and Gown row, and an incident at a "wine" given in honour of a Rugby Union blue. M——, a Winchester man, was suddenly seen to ~~seize~~ grasp the decanter in front of him, and hurl it at the head of L—— on the other side of the table. Fortunately at that moment L——, who was well advanced in his cups, fell under the table; and on being restored to his chair was heard to expostulate, "I only said he was a bloody Scotchman". L—— became a prosperous solicitor, an enthusiastic but incompetent billiard player and a zealous antiquary. M——, who was very handsome in a dark way, became a County Court Judge, a courteous gentleman, and quite human, except when he remembered that he was a Highland Scot of a historic house and suspected any reflection on that noble race. They were both old friends of mine, and both have gone before me.

On the other hand, Upcott and I were almost the only scholars of our generation who attempted to do any serious reading, and Upcott's books were so lined with red, blue and green chalks to mark the relative importance of different passages, that it had the effect of a kaleidoscope, and I am sure he sometimes mistook his markings. "Monty" Burrows,<sup>1</sup> an Eton man, and an excellent fellow, had too many friends to do much work. H. R. King from Clifton, afterwards a Master at Sherborne, was a fine scholar with a genuine appreciation of literature, but he was so much disgusted with the prosaic handling of the

<sup>1</sup> Sir Stephen Montagu Burrows, C.I.E.

Classics by the Rev. H. F. Tozer that he gave up reading them and took refuge with his favourite English authors. Gee, now Dean of Gloucester, also a Clifton man, was an Exhibitioner of assiduous industry, but at the Logic lectures of Ince, the sub-Rector (afterwards Regius Professor of Divinity), it was the custom of some of the scholars to practise table-turning at the round table at which we sat, so that the sub-Rector's notes appeared in front of Gee, and Gee's notes in front of me or anyone else who was next him.

The fact was that our lectures, with the one exception of those of H. F. Pelham, who lectured on History for Greats, were of very little use to us either for Mods. or Greats. My tutor was W. W. Jackson, afterwards Rector of the College, a refined and competent scholar, and an admirable Head of a College, and though he was most kind and sympathetic and became a valued friend, I never had anything to do with him as a Tutor for the Schools. I attended the lectures of the Rev. H. F. Tozer, who dealt with the classical authors in which we were to be examined in Mods., and, with the best intentions and the help of his own versions, divested them of the last particle of literary interest. I attribute my Second in Mods., when I ought to have got a First without any serious difficulty, to his well-meant but unfortunate handling of the Classics, and I have never forgotten the blank disappointment with which I read the Honour Mods. list in the newspaper at the post-office of Aldington, in Kent, and found my name was not among the Firsts. It did not occur to me for some little time that I might have got a Second, but there it was, and there was my name staring me in the face at the head of the Seconds.

Exeter is one of the oldest colleges of Oxford, and is and has always been a fine college with a curious character of its own, not remarkable for any dominant intellectual clique; on the other hand, casual, stout-hearted and independent. My father and two of my uncles were up at Exeter about ninety years ago, and both my sons were

there, so that three generations of my family have been undergraduates and graduates of that excellent old College, and as the result of a comparison of notes I am convinced that it has always maintained the general character that I suggest. When I went up, the College was somewhere down at the bottom of the river, but a son of Anak appeared from Clifton, a great raking lad, who bowled at a terrific pace from a height of some 6 ft. 3 in. with no particular care where the ball went. The lad was R. S. Kindersley; he settled down to rowing, became a magnificent oar, rowed three years in the Oxford boat, brought the College boat up to the head of the river with the help of "Beefers" Howe and other worthy men, played in the Oxford Rugby Union team and finally for England. It was due to his exploits in the match of England *v.* Wales that the rule of putting down the ball when tackled was made—Kindersley got a touch-down by carrying the three Welshmen who had tackled him over the line. He was a splendidly made man, and on one occasion when coaching the Eight, a bargee became offensive and violent, but after sizing up R. S. Kindersley he subsided, remarking, "You may take me as scratched!" I forget what degree he took, but he was a fine fellow of the type of John Ridd, in *Lorna Doone*, and H. R. King used to say that his company was a moral tonic. He became a Master at Eton and retired a few years ago. When I last saw him he had settled at Beaminster in Dorset, not the man he was physically, but still cheery, still of the gallant courage that I have always admired in him.

In the four years I was up, Exeter did little in the Schools. Alfred Dennis<sup>1</sup> got a First in Mods. and a Second in Greats; so did Upcott. The Dons left us pretty much to ourselves, but on the river, at Cowley and in the Parks, Exeter held its own with any college in Oxford. Charles Phillips, a Rugby man, an idle scholar but a cheery soul, always ready for a rag, and a great Rugby Union forward, played for England and proved to me the futility of science

<sup>1</sup> Sir Alfred Dennis, K.B.E., C.B.



without the necessary punch in a rough-and-tumble with no room to move. I was having lessons in boxing from a well-known professor of those days, Mr. Blake of Holywell Street. Phillips was in my rooms one day, and suggested a turn with the gloves. Confident in my fancied science, I agreed with alacrity; but Phillips, who had a ready sense of humour and weighed at least two stone more than I did, rushed me into a corner and pommelled me with such enthusiasm that, though I insisted that this was not boxing, I had to admit that he had me cold. At one time we had the captain and two other members of the Oxford Eleven in the College, competent but not great cricketers any one of them. They were too fond of waiting for the ball instead of going for it, and one of them always played in dirty flannels. I recollect taking the College XI down to Marlborough in their absence. Most of the team were recovering from their efforts the night before, and offered a poor resistance to that redoubtable bowler, A. G. Steel, then a boy at Marlborough. I knocked up some forty runs, and in a speech at supper afterwards young Steel congratulated me on my innings. I recollect my resentment at the cheek of a boy at school congratulating a second-year man at Oxford, but as I had no aptitude for speech, I simply smouldered with suppressed fury.

The Dons at Exeter were a strange lot of men. The Rector, Dr. Lightfoot, was too old to take any active part in the College—he once called me up for missing Chapels, and when I explained that I was reading very hard for Greats, he assured me that my labours would not succeed; in which he was mistaken, as I took a First in Greats. The Rev. H. F. Tozer, whose singular infelicity as a classical tutor I have already referred to, was as a fact an excellent and very generous man who had travelled in out-of-the-way places in Greece, and had presented the College with a new cricket pavilion, or the greater part of the cost of it. He wore a top-hat, a white tie and mutton-chop whiskers, and when he rode, turned his feet out, like Dr. Syntax in Rowlandson's illustrations. In spite of his

murderous assaults on Virgil, I always liked him. Old "Tommy" Shepherd, the Chaplain, was also a horseman of quite another sort. He was a little hard-bitten man, who discharged his duties with exact punctuality, but did not appear to take the slightest interest in the College or anything connected with it. Ince, on the other hand, the sub-Rector, was entirely devoted to the College, and was very much liked by all of us in spite of his uncouth appearance and his uncertain use of aspirates. "The sub-Rector's compliments and 'e won't 'ave it" was his customary message when the row in the Quad was too uproarious.

With Price, the mathematical tutor, and Ray Lankester, the biologist, I had nothing to do, being a classical scholar, but I came to know Ray Lankester well in later days at the Savile, a man of caustic humour but genial enough if you took him the right way. I am still grateful to Price for having pointed out to me that Ruskin was not necessarily a weak draughtsman because he had not the certainty of line of Michael Angelo, and that his method was to feel for his line rather than to strike it at one blow. As a matter of fact, Ruskin was a beautiful draughtsman in his own way, and I sometimes wish he had painted more, and written less on architecture. I attended some of Ruskin's lectures, but I heard so much about Ruskin and so little about anybody else that I gave it up. The atmosphere of rapt adoration with which Ruskin and all that he said was received by the young ladies of Oxford was altogether too much for me, and I relieved my feelings by making a pen-and-ink drawing of Ruskin blowing two trumpets, his own above, Turner below. This I sold to Mr. Shrimpton, the publisher of *Oxford Caricatures*, and with the proceeds bought a much-coveted engraving. I see from a letter in *The Times* (February 29, 1932) that Dr. Shadwell, who also attended Ruskin's lectures in the seventies, had much the same feeling of exasperation. He writes of Ruskin's lectures: "He annoyed me so much that I all but threw a book I had in my hand at his head, and I have never ceased to regret that I resisted the temptation".

Of all the Dons at Exeter, apart from W. W. Jackson who afterwards became a most admirable Head of the College, the two men I came most into contact with were Ingram Bywater and Henry Pelham, in both cases when I was reading for Greats. Bywater was a scholar of European reputation, but he was far above us, either in the clouds of philosophic thought or immersed in the fragments of Heraclitus. My only recollection of his tuition is an occasion on which I brought him one of the short essays (one or two sheets of foolscap) which we were instructed to write. Bywater was a short man, of a dreamy countenance with a moustache, and a head set down low on his shoulders. He occupied a set of rooms overlooking the beautiful little Fellows' Garden. The walls were covered with that nice old paper from Morris, called, I think, the "powdered" paper, a paper with a number of little Tudor roses scattered about on a yellow ground, with a white spray. There were blue and white Dutch tiles in the fireplace, a brass fender, and excellent engravings on the wall, altogether a charming scheme of colour, for Bywater was a man of very refined taste, and a friend of Walter Pater. I stumbled through my wretched essay, while old Bywater stumped up and down the room, puffing his pipe, and his one and only remark at the end was "A trifle amorphous". After this he handed me over to an excellent coach, Richards of Trinity.

As scholars we attended W. H. Courtney's lectures in philosophy at New College. There was at New College a strange undergraduate, who was known at Haileybury as "Bulbo Smith" from his resemblance to Prince Bulbo in the *Rose and the Ring*; but Bulbo Smith was a hard-headed fellow, and in the middle of a lecture put a question to the lecturer that was obviously a staggerer. However, Courtney was equal to the occasion. He stroked his great moustache and said he would see Mr. Smith afterwards. He had a favourite sentence about Lord Bacon. "It was astonishing that one who was intellectually so great was morally so mean." To us it was astonishing that such a

distinguished-looking man as our lecturer should be capable of such persistent platitudes.

Apart from Jackson, the one man among the Exeter Dons to whom I owe an undying debt of gratitude was Henry Pelham, afterward President of Trinity. Pelham was a man of good family, a tall, thin, handsome man with a square beard, carelessly dressed, yet the sort of man who looked a gentleman whatever clothes he was wearing. He lived in the Parks, and used to come into College late in the afternoon, and see us in one of the lecture-rooms. Here he used to sling his long legs over the nearest chair, smoke while he listened to what we had to say, and then talk about history himself as freely as one might talk about the ~~Eights~~, the Elevens or anything else of current interest. I have not the least recollection of what he said, and I believe some of his historical views were considered unsound by the orthodox professors. But he did for me what nobody so far had done except my old Head-master, E. H. Bradby: he gave me a living interest in history which I have never lost. He taught me to regard it as something very much larger than a collection of dates and names, and also to realize that the texts with which we wrestled, Herodotus, Thucydides, Livy and Tacitus, were immortal masterpieces. Pelham's casual afternoon talks are still my most vivid and far the most valued of all the lessons that I learnt in my four years at Oxford.

My failure to get a First in Mods. was a bitter disappointment, for I was an ambitious young man, and I made up my mind that I would get a First in Greats or die in the attempt; and this I very nearly did, for I almost broke down before the examination. In those days (1879) the examination was held both in the summer and in the autumn terms, and I entered for the autumn examination. I had retired from the cricket field in the summer term, and read steadily for seven or eight hours a day. It was a tradition in our family that my grandfather, Charles James, Bishop of London, had read sixteen to eighteen hours a day at Cambridge. It is true that he won the

Chancellor's medal, which was equivalent in those days to being a Senior Classic, and was third wrangler, and he was undoubtedly a man of great ability and tremendous energy and will power; but as for his reading sixteen hours a day, I don't believe it. Eight hours a day was nearly too much for me. I broke down in the Long and had gradually to reduce my reading to some three or four hours a day. By so doing I was just able to carry on through the examination. As my name begins with a B, I came up very soon after the examination for my *viva*, but I was completely exhausted. The examiners asked me the simplest questions, but I could not answer anything at all and they let me go. It appeared that I had done very well in all my papers, and the Authorities did a very kind thing. They realized that I had come to the end of my tether, so they intimated to my tutor that I should be called up again in another two or three weeks for my *viva*. By that time I was quite recovered. I recollect flooring triumphantly questions on a dreadful little book, Trendelenberg's *Elements of Logic*, and in due course my name appeared in the first class in the lists, together with four others, one of whom was Ruggles-Brise, afterwards Sir Evelyn, Commissioner of Police. I still regard my First in Greats as one of the proudest achievements of my life; it was won by sheer determination in not very favourable conditions, because hard reading was at a discount at Exeter College and, always excepting Henry Pelham, I got little help from my tutors.

I have little recollection of any other Dons at Oxford in those days, except that some of them looked very odd. Walter Pater of Brasenose had brought out his *Studies of the Renaissance* in 1873. I read these eagerly, and duly admired what Gosse called "his long-drawn-out style", with its infinite finesse and elaborate workmanship. But Pater was a strange, aloof creature, who shrank from the vulgar crowd, and I still think of him as a small, pale-faced man with a huge moustache, stealing along the Oxford pavements like a ghost, and hugging the wall as

he went, "utne tegam spurco Damae latus?" As to that other Olympian, Jowett of Baliol, most of us thought of him in the terms of that well-known verse:

Sir; my name is Benjamin Jowett.  
There's no knowledge but I know it.  
I am the Master of Baliol College,  
What I don't know isn't knowledge.

To us he was an unknown, and I must confess a quite immaterial quantity. I once saw Jowett and George Eliot walking together in the cloisters of Magdalen, one might think an immortal memory, but the only impression left on my mind was that they were the very plainest and physically the most unattractive people I had ever seen!

As a matter of fact, one's own college was quite enough for most undergraduates, and such knowledge as one acquired was gained not from notes of lectures which one seldom looked at again, but from hard, assiduous reading of one's books; and let me also add that the two and a half years that I spent in reading for Greats was by far the most valuable training that I ever received. I am a firm believer in the Gymnastic theory of education, that is, that the object of education is not to cram the mind with facts, but to train it as a keen and sharp-edged instrument. Encyclopaedic knowledge is useful enough, but what is really priceless is the knowledge of good and evil, the power of analysis, the ability to cut through the crowds of facts and seize the essential point. Looking back on a long professional life, I still regard that school of Greats as the foundation of my career. More than that, the school of "Litterae Humaniores" gave me some further understanding of Humanism, and brought me into touch with a side of life that I might otherwise have missed completely. I came down from Oxford knowing little beyond my Classics, but with such wits as I possessed sharpened to a razor's edge.

At Oxford for the first time I began to find myself. Some of my friends used to say, not unkindly, that I was unlike

other undergraduates. I think I was naturally shy. Four years at Mrs. X——'s school and seven at Haileybury had driven me in on myself, but the sunshine of Oxford cleared away the clouds. Except for the term in which my mother died, I was always happy there, and I left Oxford with ideals which have remained with me to this day, in spite of the batterings of fortune, and the thorns ever ready to spring up and choke one's young ambitions.

## CHAPTER IV.

A Travelling Tutorship—An Architect's Office, 1881—The Royal Academy Schools—Spiers—The Academicians—Waterhouse, Bodley, Street, Aitchison—A Students' Supper and Leighton.

I WAS now three-and-twenty, and had to look out for a career. More by circumstance than anything else I entered for architecture. My first idea when I was some nine years old had been the Navy, but that, as already mentioned, was wiped out by the disastrous expedition to Dover. Then one day I made a childish drawing of a house which was supposed by my fond parents to show a turn for architecture, and as my uncle Arthur was already a successful architect, it was thought that here there might be an opening for me. So far as I was concerned I thought no more about it, and at Oxford had vague ideas of the Indian Civil; but in those days some knowledge of mathematics was insisted on, and as I knew no mathematics and detested the very sight of them, the Indian Civil was out of the question. I was already keenly interested in art in a very amateur way. I used to go and copy the drawings of Raphael and Michelangelo in the old Taylorian, and I think if I had had independent means I should have gone for Sculpture; but I hadn't, so it was settled that I should enter my uncle's office as a pupil, and he very generously gave me my articles.

Before entering his office, however, I had one final kick, as it were. Henry Pelham offered me a travelling tutorship. I was to travel on the Continent in charge of a boy of nineteen, young W——, who had just left Eton. We were supposed to do a little reading, and Sismondi's *Italian Republics* was suggested as a subject. It is true we



took Sismondi with us, but we very soon dropped him. The various places we visited in France, Italy and Germany were far too interesting for us to waste any time in reading, and this was my, and I think W——'s, first introduction to the Continent. I recollect two incidents of that tour. The first was at Nuremberg. We were sitting one evening smoking on the rampart in perfect innocence, when a Private came up and said something in German. We got up, and while I was explaining that I did not know what he wanted, young W——, who stood about 6 ft. 3 in., suddenly slung out over my shoulder and landed on the nose of the unhappy Private, who retired howling to his Corporal, who was watching proceedings from a window some distance away. I knew no German, but I knew this would not do. I had visions of imprisonment and what not, so I took W—— round the nearest corner and said, "Now, my lad, you run for all you are worth"—which we both did, lay *perdu* in the hotel that night, and left Nuremberg first train next morning. .

The other incident was on the Italian Lakes. At Milan I think it was, we made the acquaintance of an attractive lady with a young daughter of about nineteen. We met them again at Cadenabbia, and rowed across the lake to an island, where we had a picnic. The lady seemed a little forward, and remarked that she had forgotten her petticoat, but I was an ingenuous young man and thought little of it. An old Anglo-Indian, however, who was staying in the hotel, asked me to come for a walk with him next morning, and gave me a hint that we were in rather dangerous company. I had sense enough to take the hint, and when we left, with warm assurances to the ladies that we should meet again on the Rhine, I made a secret resolution that we would do nothing of the sort. We went down the Rhine, and when we were thirty miles below Coblenz, where we were to have met, I informed young W—— of the fact, much to his annoyance. Thereupon he made for me, but I got him round the waist and swung him round with such vigour that he put his foot right

through a water-jug, and the romance ended in fits of laughter. I am grateful to that old Anglo-Indian to this day.

I entered my uncle's office in the autumn of 1881. My uncle<sup>1</sup> was then well known as a Church Architect. He was the most delightful of men, witty, cheerful, a first-rate amateur actor and a skilful painter in water-colours. He was my mother's younger brother and had been educated at Rugby and Trinity, Cambridge, where he and his brother Frank, afterwards drowned at sea in attempting to save life, were known as "Thunder" and "Lightning", I take it on account of the pace they went, as I never heard of either of them having done any reading at all. After leaving Cambridge my uncle Arthur went into the office of Hardwick, the architect of Lincoln's Inn Hall, had lessons from J. D. Harding in painting, and travelled with his intimate friend Cockerell, the son of old S. P. Cockerell the R.A. and Professor of Architecture at the Academy. My uncle was a very busy man, and perhaps it was unfortunate that he was so much in demand by the clergy of the Church of England for churches, schools and "restorations". He did a great deal of work, in some cases for quite inadequate remuneration, for he was a most generous man, and the incessant repetition of the same sort of problem, and much too much of it, checked the development of the promise of his younger days.

I entered his office full of enthusiasm, thinking that I should find myself in an atmosphere of high ideals, a modern version of the schools or studios of the Italian Renaissance. Instead of this I found myself in the company of a somewhat depressed managing clerk, two or three assistants and half a dozen cheerful young fellows who were serving their articles as pupils, and most of whom were much more interested in the latest news, sporting or otherwise, than in the latest experiment in Architecture. The usual remark of one of the pupils every morning was, "Any spice in the papers?" One pupil, an old Etonian, took a

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Sir Arthur Blomfield, A.R.A.

genuine interest in his work; the principal interests of another, also an Etonian, a rowing man and a very good fellow, were shooting and drawing wild ducks, and looking after a lot of boys, the forerunners of the Boy Scouts.

I came into this office full of zeal and ambition. I disliked being disturbed in my work, and on one occasion nearly transfixed an otherwise blameless fellow pupil who kept on buzzing round me. I threw the big wooden office compasses at him, but these flew open on the way and the sharp point quivered in the door within an inch of my friend's person. On another occasion the office wit, a muscular little red-headed man, became intolerable, and having warned him that I should go for him if he continued to annoy me, I went for him with a low tackle, and after a brief but vigorous struggle got him where I wanted, and spanked him soundly. My uncle was away, and the noise brought up the whole office, but they disappeared at my suggestion. My antagonist was a sportsman, and we were excellent friends afterwards. Before the various architectural schools were started it used to be the custom for parents and guardians to send boys who hoped to be Architects for three years into the office of some reputable Architect, and pay him a fee of one hundred guineas a year for receiving them as articulated pupils. An intelligent boy who worked could learn a great deal by the study of working drawings in the office, by finishing up and inking in drawings, and by making the innumerable tracings required before sun-prints were introduced. On the other hand, no sort of instruction was given in the theory and history of architecture, and not very much in the applied science of construction. Moreover, the Principal, if he was a busy man, had to be away a good deal looking after his work, and the pupil was necessarily left a good deal to his own devices. I came down from Oxford knowing nothing whatever about architecture, and I well recollect the astonishment of my uncle when, on his using the term "mitre", I told him that the only mitre I had ever heard of was a bishop's mitre, and on my first work, when I had

started practice, I still thought that "wainscot" meant skirting, and was agreeably surprised to find wainscot oak used on the staircase of the first house that I ever designed. I called the builder's attention to the wainscot, and he replied that I had specified wainscot. I received the information with dignified assurance.

My uncle was very good to me, and so far as his time allowed took unusual trouble to instruct me, but the fact was that in those days one had to acquire most of one's knowledge on one's own, and it was here that I found my training at Oxford invaluable. I find a curious confirmation of this in a letter that Phene Spiers, the master of the Academy School, wrote to my father in January 1884. Spiers was sorry that I did not enter for the Gold Medal, but added, "I feel, however, that at his age he is quite right. He is so quick and so hard a worker that I should not be surprised at his making as many drawings in a three months' tour as an average student in a year". He thought I was wise to travel before I started practice on my own, and expressed the hope that "his practice career would be as brilliant as his student's career".

In 1882 I was admitted as a student in the junior school of architecture at the Royal Academy, and I still have my old "bone", the ivory disc given to students on admission. Pickersgill, a very courteous and charming old gentleman, was still the Keeper, and one used to meet him wandering about the corridors of the Academy schools, and sometimes, though rarely, in the Architectural school. That school was at that time, just fifty years ago, doing excellent work. There were four Visitors, members of the Academy, who set subjects for their period of visiting, and criticized the students' efforts. Phene Spiers was master, and his function was to attend in the school, give the students advice, note their attendances and see that everything was in order. Unkind people used to say that he spent his time reading French novels. I can only say that in my time he was of real service to all of us who were really keen on our work. Spiers himself had been trained in the *École des*

Beaux Arts. He was a fine draughtsman, and exceptionally well informed in regard to Greek and Roman architecture. Possibly for want of opportunity he never showed any great capacity in design, but I think he must often have groaned in spirit at our crude experiments in Classic, Gothic, or whatever it might be.

In my first year one of the subjects set was "a pedestal for an equestrian statue". W. D. Caröe, who worked next me in the School and was then in Pearson's office, embarked on an elaborate design in the "Decorated" style. I told him he would never finish it, nor did he. For myself I tried what I imagined to be the Romanesque manner. I was already becoming impatient of Gothic as practised by the revivalists, and had been stirred by the ventures of J. W. Burgess, A.R.A., then a name to conjure with on account of his freakish imagination and brilliant draughtsmanship. In the spandrels above my round arches I had introduced large figures at the four angles which I had intended to be carried out in the round. Norman Shaw, who was the Visitor, looked at my drawing and asked how I proposed to treat these figures, and on my replying "In the round", he said, "How disappointing. I thought you intended low relief." I have been grateful to Shaw ever since for that criticism. It gave me a fresh outlook altogether on the meaning of sculpture in relation to architecture; indeed it was the first glimpse given me into the meaning of *Architecturë* itself.

I shall return to Norman Shaw later. The other Visitors in my time were Waterhouse, Pearson, Bodley and Street. Waterhouse was a bland, handsome man with rather a leonine head, who had a great affection for that horrible red terra-cotta combined with red brick which he used in most of his Insurance buildings. He was extraordinarily successful. Shaw used to say that in one year Waterhouse received the largest professional income ever reached by any architect, amounting to something like £80,000—I take it the accumulation in one year of fees on several of his big buildings.

In his latter days his reputation diminished. He rather withdrew from practice and, slightly to the annoyance of the Painters, used to send to the Royal Academy large water-colours, with a sky of a blue beyond the range even of Messrs. Reckitts. In other regards he was kindly and courteous, and had he been content with plain brickwork and less elaborate detail his reputation would have stood higher than it does. One may not like it, but there is a good deal of vigorous imagination in his Natural History Museum. John Loughborough Pearson was quite another sort of man. He was a plain, stocky little man, who said very little but had an immense knowledge of Gothic of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. Of Classic I think he was simply unconscious. He was supposed to have said that he could cover a Church with stone vaulting at no greater cost than that of a wooden roof. He certainly did some very fine interiors, such as that of the church of Red Lion Square. Pearson had a genuine sense of proportion, he eschewed ornament, and there is an austere dignity in some of his churches which places them far above the normal nineteenth-century neo-Gothic church.

George Bodley was at the opposite pole to Pearson. I recollect him a tall, thin, rather aristocratic-looking man with a sallow complexion and a thin beard. He was undoubtedly a distinguished architect endowed with a refined taste. If a little too fond of elaborate detail and a somewhat lavish use of colour, his detail was far and away the best of any produced by the Gothic revivalists. One has only to compare it with the detail of St. Mary Abbots, for example (the first Gilbert Scott), to appreciate the difference between commercial detail and the work of an artist. Bodley was an unpractical sort of man. I have heard that at the Council meetings of the Royal Academy, instead of attending to business, he used to write verses on slips of paper and pass them to any of his colleagues who was tolerant enough to read them. I have little recollection of Waterhouse, Bodley or Pearson as Visitors, and they made no impression on me as a student.

My recollections of George Edmund Street are limited to one incident. I was hard at work one afternoon in the school, making a drawing from a cast of the familiar dragon spandrel of Stone Church and was in a desperate hurry to finish it in time to catch a train at Charing Cross for a week-end with my people in Kent. Phene Spiers came in with a stout, elderly, bearded man with large feet and a vigorous walk, who looked over my shoulder and made some remarks, to which I paid no attention. After he had left Spiers told me with some consternation that this was the great Mr. Street. Street died in 1883, killed by overwork and the incessant worry of the new Law Courts which were then being built from his designs. He had just been made president of the Institute after a hotly contested election in which the commercial element was represented by Horace Jones, and great things were expected of him, for he was a man of unusual ability and immense energy who would have made his mark in any profession. I think this was his weak point. He was a man of all-round ability, but was not, essentially and before all things, an artist. Able as he was, his mind was rather stubborn and intolerant, and his designs were the result of a determined effort to realize in practice a doctrinaire and historically inaccurate theory. They did not spring from the free working of an artist's mind concentrated on the essential qualities of architecture itself.

Street never altered his views. He was steeped in Gothic. Unfortunately he was incapable of seeing anything else. To him, as to A. W. Pugin before him, Gothic architecture was the only architecture based on what he called "the true principles of the art" and any other manner he spurned as belonging to "the falsest and weakest schools of art". He deliberately urged that the only thing to do with the great architects of the Renaissance was either to "forget their works entirely, or remember them so far only as to take warning by their faults and failures".<sup>1</sup> In this he was at one with

<sup>1</sup> Preface to first edition of *Brick and Marble in the Middle Ages*. •

Ruskin's fantastic ideas of architecture, the results of which were to be seen in the Natural History Museum at Oxford, inspired, if not actually designed, by Ruskin himself, and in Street's last work, the new Law Courts, the last word of that histrionic neo-Gothic which makes much nineteenth-century architecture so intolerably tiresome. Street hated classical architecture quite as much as Aitchison, the Professor of Architecture in the Academy, detested Gothic, and I have heard that he (Street) pushed his prejudice to such a point that he delayed Bodley's election as full R.A., because Bodley had dared to make an excursion into French sixteenth-century Renaissance in the old School Board building on the Embankment, now destroyed. Street, however, like T. G. Jackson, was one of the rare architects who could write readable English. His *Brick and Marble in the Middle Ages* and his *Gothic Architecture in Spain* are written in clear, vigorous English, and I think his reputation will rest more firmly on these works than on the Law Courts with its unreal detail, its prodigal waste of stone and its uncomfortable plan.

George Aitchison, for many years Professor of Architecture, was a genial old person with a fund of humorous if not very proper stories. He designed Leighton's Arab House, and probably owed his election to his friendship with Leighton, for his architectural work was inconsiderable, and he held the office, somewhat unusual for a Royal Academician, of District Surveyor of Upper Tooting. In those days students in the Royal Academy school had to attend the full course of lectures in Architecture, Anatomy and Perspective, in addition to lectures from time to time on Painting and Sculpture. The lectures on anatomy, illustrated by portions of the human body preserved in spirits, were unpleasant and perfectly useless. Indeed the only lecture that remains in my memory was an able address by Hamo Thornycroft, then a young Associate, in which he pointed out that in fine sculpture the lines and forms were neither potatoes nor lumps of jelly, but formed by a subtle intersection of curved surfaces. Dear old



Aitchison's lectures, chiefly on Roman Baths and Vitruvius, were interminably tedious. In his latter days he used to lose his place, and I am told the students used to cheer when he spotted the right place in his illustrations, showing that they were better fellows than the students in the Beaux Arts, who would not let Viollet le Duc finish his lectures.

There was also a modelling class for architectural students conducted by Hugh Stannus, whose stock-in-trade was that he had once worked under Alfred Stevens. We were rather doubtful of his capacity, but he was kindly and helpful, and several of us used to devote our afternoons, even on Saturdays, to this modelling class. After Street's death, by his express wish, the completion of the Law Courts was entrusted to my uncle, and I was sent to work in the Law Courts, where I spent about three months in reducing the plan from  $\frac{1}{8}$  scale to  $\frac{1}{16}$ , and incidentally in wandering about the building and working with the man who was modelling the carving. One of the spandrels in the Great Hall, in the best manner of the Stone church spandrel, was actually carved from my model. It has often been suggested that architects should be craftsmen, that is, be able to execute with their own hands the work that they entrust to others. I do not hold with this view, which seems to me a misconception of the purposes of architecture, but to be able to model in clay up to a certain point is a very useful accomplishment for an architect.

The Academy schools were undoubtedly doing good work in the early eighties. Every seat in the architectural room was occupied, and a very keen interest was taken in the work. In those days the Architectural Association and other important schools were in their infancy, and by far the best training in design, and the best criticism on it by well-known architects, were to be obtained in the architectural school of the Royal Academy. Also, some of us at any rate were in touch with students in the schools of Painting and Sculpture. Harry Bates, Frampton, Pomeroy and Pegram were at work in the Sculpture school, and Greif-

fenhagen in the School of Painting, all of whom afterwards became members of the Academy. We used in those days to have an annual students' supper before Christmas, at which members of the Academy were good enough to be present. One year I was Chairman, and found on my right hand the President himself, Leighton. I was a good deal alarmed, especially as I had to make a speech, and I had no sort of confidence in my ability to make it. But Leighton was delightful; he drew me out and put me at ease, and did all he could to remove my nervousness. I recollect that some bold student in the Painting School had made a drawing for the occasion, in which eminent members of the Academy were represented as the signs of the zodiac, and Leighton was presented as Taurus the Bull. I heard afterwards that he did not like it at all, suspecting possible reflection on his morals or his brains, though I do not think any was intended, as Leighton was always sympathetic and very good to students. His art has gone out of fashion, but his fine presence, his ready address and his genial nature made him an ideal President, probably the best in the long history of the Academy.

I won the £10 prize in the Junior school in 1882, and in 1883-4 moved on to the Senior school, where I entered for the £25 prize and won it with a design for a house, based on the front of a house in Bloomsbury Square. It had a gable and a frieze of figures below it, and other devices. It was a wretched affair, but I suppose the others were worse. This concluded my two years in the Academy schools. I did not enter for the travelling scholarship. Spiers was very anxious that I should, but in the autumn of 1883 I was travelling in France and Spain, and after my return started in practice on my own.

## CHAPTER V

Travels in France and Spain—Gothic Architecture—The *Portfolio*—  
“A Week in Somersetshire”.

I STARTED on my travels early in October 1883. Spiers gave me a list of places in France that I should do well to visit, and also suggested a companion who had been told off to glean what he could of the Early French Renaissance in a fortnight, in order that his Principal might reproduce the results in the Hospital for Consumptives to be built from his designs at Hampstead. We went to Paris, and here I find I confined my studies to the details of Nôtre Dame (a capital from the Choir and two or three of the grotesque figures on the West Towers), the Sainte Chapelle and the Hôtel de Cluny. I was still seeing everything through Gothic spectacles, quite unconscious of the splendid architecture that was to follow in another three hundred years. From Paris we moved on to Orléans, Blois and Tours. Here again I find that through simple ignorance I missed all the best things. At Blois, for example, I made careful drawings of the François I staircase, but never noticed the far finer work that François Mansart did at Blois a hundred and fifty years later—the façade facing the entrance, with its wonderful staircase. We visited Tours, but it was not till many years after that I realized that Tours possessed a very fine bridge over the Loire. My companion was of course eager for the famous Chateaux of the Loire district, Chambord, Chaumont, Amboise, Azay-le-Rideau and Chenonceaux. I made many careful drawings of the details of arabesques, strange capitals, Satyrs, Salamanders, and François I monograms and medallions, but not a single plan; and only one geo-

metrical drawing of a bay at Azay-le-Rideau. The fact was that, owing to the disastrous misconception of architecture spread abroad by Ruskin and zealously advocated by Gilbert Scott, Street and the Gothic revivalists, students in my time were taught to waste their time on details of sculpture, the mason's craft in short, instead of using their brains on the critical and analytical study of buildings. At Amboise I parted company with my companion; he was an excellent and industrious fellow, but I got tired of his arguments, so I told him that I must get away south, and left him labouring with his turrets and lucarnes at Tours.

At the beginning of November I went to Loches and then to the fine old town of Bourges, where I stayed some days drawing diligently and accurately, but to little or no purpose. I spent a whole day drawing the Romanesque doorway of the south transept of the Cathedral. Not a single detail of that great entrance was omitted, the Saviour and the four Evangelists in the tympanum, the twelve Apostles under little arches on the lintel, the six figures of kings and queens under their canopies in the jambs, fourteen angels on the inner members of the arch, ten on the outer one, and all the beads and billets, beasts and foliages that fill the rest of the doorway. The *commis voyageur* staying at my hotel, who looked over my shoulder while I was drawing the doorway, pronounced it to be *la même chose*, and was so pleased with my drawing that when I met him again at dinner he wanted to give me a *petit cadeau*, a curious silver ring with nude figures chasing each other round the circle; but not knowing that "cadeau" meant "gift", I handed it back to him, I fear somewhat to his disappointment.

From Bourges I struck down into the Auvergne, and came to Clermont-Ferrand, Issoire and Le Puy. Here I came upon the extremely interesting round-arched architecture of the Puy de Dôme, and for the first time in my journey realized the value of composition in the apsidal ends of the great churches of Clermont-Ferrand and

Issoire, and again in the wonderful double church of Le Puy with its sixty steps leading up from the lower level. I still regret not having made a wiser and more careful study of these great churches, but in those days I was still in the bond of (Gothic) iniquity, and could not see the wood for the trees. From Le Puy I wandered on to Avignon, thence to Arles; Montmajour and Nîmes, and so to Carcassonne. "La Cité", old Carcassonne, seemed to me a fairy city, in spite of the facts that a good part of it was the work of Viollet le Duc, and that the inhabitants used it as a latrine. Still it was a wonderful sight, with its towers and battlements rising high above the steep wooded banks of the Aude. I left Carcassonne at the end of November and crossed the frontier to Gerona. Having deposited my luggage at the hotel in the afternoon I wandered round the town, but lost my way. I knew no Spanish and nobody could tell me how to find the hotel. The whole thing was like a nightmare till, fortunately, a Spaniard who could talk French heard my appeals, and explained that the hotel had changed its name since the date of my guide-book. Gerona has a great cathedral with the widest nave of any mediaeval cathedral in the world, 73 feet wide, and was probably built by the architect who also designed the splendid Cathedral of Palma, with its nave 170 feet long, 70 feet wide, and 140 feet high to the soffit of the vaulting.

Instead of noticing this remarkable plan at Gerona, I drew some unimportant detail, and at Avila, that strange desolate old city with its Cathedral and its three churches, I seem to have spent all my time on a set of drawings of the tomb of St. Vicente, with its panels of the three Saints being tortured and finally crushed under a huge block of stone. Architectural students are bound to waste some time from not knowing what buildings to look at, or how to look at them, but in my own case the waste of time was exaggerated owing to the fact that I was an insatiable worker, tremendously keen, and I had not yet learnt the meaning of architecture, or had any hint of it from my elders and betters among the Architects of that time. I find

nearly all my drawings made on that tour (about one hundred) are drawings of the details of architectural ornament, French Renaissance, Spanish Renaissance, Romanesque; the Archbishop's tomb at Toledo, a tomb in the north aisle of the Cathedral at Burgos, the staircase in Santa Cruz at Toledo, or the Patio of the Casa de la Infanta at Zaragossa. This last, by the way, was a remarkably good pen-and-ink drawing and, why I do not now know, very much better than the pencil drawings I was making at the same time.

The work that I did was of course of considerable value in giving one's mind a subconscious background, but technically it was almost useless. I learnt little of plan, composition, rhythm, proportion and silhouette, and in the fifty years that have passed since I made those drawings, I doubt if I have ever looked at them again. Had I been a Sculptor student this would have been well enough, but except as a pleasant exercise, my elaborate drawings of the shrine of St. Vicente, and the great doorway at Bourges, were useless. I made the same mistake at Barcelona and Tarragona. At Tarragona I did begin to realize something of the dignity of Spanish twelfth-century architecture, for I made a fairly accurate perspective of the interior looking across from the south transept. I also bribed a verger to leave me in the Cathedral during the siesta in order to draw the remarkable altar-stone, which, I was told, was only uncovered once a year at the Carnival. It is in white marble about 10 ft. long and 3 ft. 6 in. high, and the whole front is covered with carving, a large central seated figure in a vesica with smaller figure-subjects in a double range of compartments on either side. I should like to know more of this altar-piece. O'Shea does not mention it in his *Guide to Spain*.

Travelling in Spain fifty years ago was different from what it is now. Moreover, I was travelling in the winter, and I find this note on a drawing I had begun of that grim ruined Cathedral on its rock above the river at Lerida: "Dec. 7. Stopped by east wind and snow". To reach some

of these more or less derelict places one had to go by diligence, and the diligence usually started at about 2 A.M. On one cold winter's morning I looked inside the coach, but I found it far too redolent of garlic, and sat on the box by the driver. The driver started his team with a wild cry and a dexterous flip with his whip, the end of which having stirred up his horses landed in my eye. I responded with a remarkable flow of English to which the driver paid not the slightest attention. I found the Spaniards a queer, impassive people and yet rather inquisitive. I was sitting one evening with a company of Spaniards round the fire-side of our inn at Burgos, I think it was, and they addressed me courteously enough but desisted, finding I knew no Spanish. I was, however, able to follow them here and there from my knowledge of Latin, and I was nearly caught out as I smiled when one of them said I was *muy independiente*. I once tried to converse in Latin with a priest at Tarragona, but as he spoke Latin like a Spaniard and I spoke it in the old-fashioned English way, neither of us understood the other and we had to give it up.

After the romantic towns in the north of Spain, Madrid seemed very dull, and I spent the whole of my time there in the Prado studying Velasquez. At Christmas 1883 I found myself at Toledo, horribly cold and badly lodged. My bedroom had a wretched little iron bedstead, no carpet, a charcoal stove which of course I could not use, and two meagre blankets on the bed, and the only way I could keep warm was to put a heap of my own clothes on the bed. There was a midnight Mass in the Cathedral on Christmas Eve, a magnificent ceremony in a noble building, but after the Lord Mayor's Show came the Donkey cart. When the Mass was finished, the inhabitants of Toledo paraded round the town beating kettles, and saucepans, and frying-pans, and anything else that would make a horrible noise.

I had now been travelling for some three months, and though I persevered with my notes and drawings—I was moving south—the fine edge of my first enthusiasm was less

keen, and the rest of my tour was more or less a matter of sightseeing.

I went on to Cordoba, where I made one of my rare attempts at water-colours, an interior view of the great mosque with its Moorish arches and its marble columns, the *disjecta membra* of Roman temples; then to Seville, where, apart from its amazing Cathedral, my chief recollection is of the native pottery, then gradually disappearing before the article of commerce. In those days you could still buy for a few pence those large two-handled pots with a beautiful dark-green glaze and the marks of the potter's wheel, and I still have a great dish with a queer sort of creature like a hare in green, yellow and blue on a white ground which carried on faithfully that Moorish tradition, derived from the East, of which examples were shown at Burlington House in the Persian Exhibition of 1931.

From Seville I proceeded to Cadiz, where I forgot all about the Cathedral designed by pupils of Churriguera, and took no note of the wonderful position of Cadiz on its peninsula between the Atlantic Ocean and Cadiz Bay. From Cadiz I proceeded to Gibraltar by one of the Haynes Line boats. There steamers used to start at some unearthly hour in the early morning, 5 or 6 A.M., and one had to be rowed out across the bay in pitch darkness to get on board. My recollection is that I and my portmanteau were simply hurled on board by the Spanish boatmen; but one expected this sort of thing in Spain fifty years ago.

At Seville I had met that strange, wandering Englishman, John Lomas, who was then revising O'Shea's *Guide to Spain and Portugal*. Lomas travelled for years in Spain and knew it from end to end. He was full of enthusiasm, and I have always regretted that I did not come across him earlier in my wanderings. I met him again at Granada where his knowledge was most useful. He reproached me for my intolerance in having entirely ignored the Cathedral at Cadiz, but this was the least of the failings of my ignorance in those student days. Since then and later in life I have studied the



Baroque elsewhere, and have come to the conclusion that, though it has a certain fascination of its own in Austria and even in Germany, the Latin races made it the last word of vulgarity, and the Churrigueresque was the worst of the lot. I ended up my tour in Granada, and the beauties of the place and the subtle delicacy of Moorish art for a time wiped out all my impressions of Spain and its extravagant Renaissance art, and, on the whole, this was an excellent thing as it left one's mind a *tabula rasa*, ready for a fresh start. Also, after three or four months' solitary wandering, I was becoming tired of my own company, so I took the train to Madrid, and after twenty-four hours in a third-class carriage on a Spanish railway I arrived at Madrid, unwashed, unkempt and unshaven, to find myself surrounded by three very efficient-looking *guardias civiles* in their cloaks and three-cornered hats. Apparently they took me for a Carlist conspirator, but I produced my passport, and they bowed me away. After a night in Madrid I made straight home. It has always been a habit of mine, after a more or less prolonged absence, to reach home before my time—the homing instinct, I suppose. Anyhow, I reached the little station on the S.E.R. a day or two before I was expected. There was no carriage to meet me and I tramped the two miles across the fields to the Rectory, and when I appeared at the front door was at first regarded as a total stranger. I had grown a beard and no doubt looked like nothing at all.

In spite of all the pains I had been at to fill my sketch-book with innumerable details of Renaissance ornament, French and Spanish, the abiding impression left by all that I had seen was that of Romanesque architecture, the churches of the Puy de Dôme, the cloisters of Montmajour, the grim, almost savage sculpture of St. Trophimus at Arles, the west front of the abbey church of St. Gilles and the cloisters of Tarragona and its Cathedral. In architecture and in all the arts one is driven to one's destination by temperament. I may as well confess my wickedness. I take it that I never really cared for Gothic, except where

it was least characteristically Gothic: that is to say where it was free from that craftsmanship which covered the surface of buildings with meticulous detail, which translated water-spouts into gargoyles and studded its spires and gables with crockets. Enthusiastic writers are eloquent on this work as a labour of love, but in fact it was work done for a daily wage, in accordance with a long-established tradition, often with strange imagination and excellent skill, but the results were the trappings of architecture, not architecture itself.

I find myself tired by the bundles of long thin shafts and the restless tracery of Gothic interiors, and have a sense of imprisonment in their narrow choirs. There are of course exceptions, the splendid interior of Strasbourg Cathedral, for instance, and the noble nave of the Cathedral at Palma, but in Gothic architecture I am always disquieted by its restlessness and its lack of amplitude, and I cannot get back to the point of view which inspired these wonderful buildings; all I can do is to admire them from a respectful distance. In Romanesque architecture, clumsy and immature as it often was, there is a certain masculine directness which appealed to some kindred quality in myself, and at the time I was so much enamoured of it that I actually meditated an attempt to write a history of Romanesque architecture. I mentioned this to my father, but he, being a man of shrewd common sense, suggested that perhaps this was just a little too ambitious.

Thinking it over I came to the conclusion that he was right, and switched off to the modest subject of old Sussex iron-work. Nobody had studied it. I had collected some materials in east Kent and Sussex, and I put them together and wrote an article for the *Portfolio*, an excellent monthly magazine edited by Philip Hamerton, and owned and published by Seeley. I followed this up with two or three articles on the half-timber architecture of the Weald of Kent, with illustrations from drawings I had made. Seeley was a kindly and intelligent man of wide knowledge, and I have always been grateful to him, for it was through him that I first

saw myself in print, and was encouraged to persevere with my critical and historical studies of Architecture. I do not know when the old *Portfolio* ceased to exist. It was run on a much higher plane of knowledge and culture than the various magazines and journals which have taken its place. I have lost the number containing my account of the Sussex foundries; my account of the half-timber houses of the Weald appeared in 1887, followed by an article on Haarlem. In 1888 I wrote three articles on "Some Architects of the English Renaissance", and "Nicholas Stone, the Sculptor", and in 1889 three articles on Inigo Jones. These were early drafts of some of the material which I afterwards embodied in my *History of English Architecture*; and an article on "English Gardens" was a preliminary sketch for the *Formal Garden in England*, my first book,<sup>1</sup> which appeared in 1892, with illustrations by Inigo Thomas.

In 1890 I went a walking tour with Edward Prior<sup>2</sup> and Ernest Newton.<sup>3</sup> Prior and I argued and fought most of the time, with Newton as peacemaker. I made sketches for an article in the *Portfolio*, which duly appeared under the title of "A Week in Somerset", and Prior and Newton called me "the Commercial Sketcher", which I took in very good part, because, though excellent architects, I knew that neither of them could draw. With the exception of the articles on Inigo Jones, all these articles were illustrated by reproductions of my pen-and-ink drawings. They were not particularly good, but I made some careful and well-executed drawings to illustrate Loftie's account of Westminster Abbey. This was being illustrated by Herbert Railton, then much admired for his brilliant architectural drawings, and a master of the "Crumbling Line". Railton fell ill, and I was asked to take his place. Now that I look back at them, after forty-three years, I am surprised to see how good the pen-and-ink work was in the drawings

<sup>1</sup> Macmillans.

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards A.R.A. and Slade Professor at Cambridge.

<sup>3</sup> Afterwards R.A.

that I made of the figures on the tombs of William de Valence and John of Eltham. They were not nearly so picturesque as Railton's drawings, but they were genuine line work. The great advance in process work has knocked out pen-and-ink drawing, which used to be absolutely necessary for reproduction. Nowadays pencil work can be reproduced, not only without failure but sometimes with actual improvement, but the precision of line necessary for good pen-and-ink drawing was an admirable training, and I attribute much of the sloppy and inaccurate drawing of the present day to the complete neglect of the study of pure line.

## CHAPTER VI

The Art Workers' Guild: Simonds, Sedding, Crane, Brett, Sumner, Swan—*The Formal Garden in England*—*Architecture, a Profession or an Art*—Norman Shaw and T. G. Jackson.

I HAD now to start on my own as an architect. I left my uncle's office in the summer of 1883, partly because I was drawing away from his manner of design, partly owing to a misunderstanding on my part. Relations were strained for the time, though they were soon re-established, for my uncle bore no man malice, and generously recommended me for two or three works a little later on. Meanwhile I had become engaged to the lady who became my wife, Frances, daughter of Henry Burra, of Springfield, Rye, in Sussex, but I had yet to make my way, and we waited three years before we were married. I took rooms on the second floor in 17 Southampton Street, where for the next three years I carried on such work as came my way, a house at Weybridge for my cousin, Arthur Brook (then in the Treasury), the "restoration" of Beckley Church in Sussex, and various small works. In the intervals I drew and measured old buildings and spent my week-ends either with my people in the Rectory at Aldington or at Springfield. I had given up cricket as it took too much time and was too expensive, but I was assiduous at lawn tennis, and the fast underhand service with a lot of cut on it, which I learnt more than fifty years ago, has stood me in good stead ever since. It is just about fifty years since the overhead smash service was introduced and, I am bound to say, revolutionized the game very much to its advantage.

Edward Prior, the architect, afterwards A.R.A. and Slade Professor at Cambridge, was established on the first

floor of 17 Southampton Street. Prior was a Cambridge blue (high and long jump), a man of considerable ability, and of a thoughtful and original turn of mind, who for some reason or another has never quite won the success he deserved. I found him stimulating company, and it was through him that I made the acquaintance of Shaw's men—Lethaby, Macartney, Newton and Horsley, all of whom made their mark later on, and as I showed a genuine admiration for the work of their master, Norman Shaw, I was accepted as a member of "the family". This was in 1884, and it was just about this time that there was a stirring of the waters that led to two important movements, the foundation of the Art Workers' Guild and of the Arts and Crafts Society. We younger men felt that there was something wrong with the arts, that we were living in watertight compartments, knowing nothing of what was being done by our neighbours, the Painters and Sculptors, and separated from the craftsmen by the barriers of trade. The idea of the Art Workers' Guild was to bring all the arts together, to place artists and craftsmen of all sorts in touch with one another, without any foolish attempt to discriminate between fine art and any other art. It was an honest and sincere attempt to find a common standpoint from which all the graphic and plastic arts and crafts should be approached.

Macartney and Horsley were the first secretaries, and I think Lethaby, Prior and Newton were members when I joined in 1885. George Simonds was the first Master in 1884 and 1885. Simonds was an enthusiastic Sculptor who knew all about the technical processes of sculpture, and produced groups in the best Classical manner, which, though excellent up to a point, never quite came off, and I think it was a disappointment to him that he was not elected into the Academy. In later life he abandoned the art of sculpture for the far more profitable calling of directing the affairs of a well-known brewery. Simonds was a fine upstanding man, and his vigour and enthusiasm were invaluable. I recollect his saying that in another twenty

years the Art Workers' Guild would either have ceased to exist or would have revolutionized the art of this country. It has done neither the one nor the other, but I think it is due to the young men of the eighties and their leaders that the arts were rescued from the paralysing conventions of the Victorian era, and that architecture finally escaped from the slow death of revivalism.

Our earlier meetings were held in a room near St. James, and I remember that at one of them J. D. Sedding called on me to say something, but I was overwhelmed with confusion, and it was after this second failure that I took myself in hand, determined, if I had anything to say, to learn how to say it. We moved to Barnard's Inn, Holborn, in 1887, and used to meet once a fortnight in every month except August and September. The meetings began at eight and were held in the old Hall. Everybody smoked who wished to. The paper was read, after which we adjourned for an interval into an adjoining room for whiskies-and-sodas and other drinks, and then returned to the Hall for the discussions. These sometimes became extremely vivacious. I recollect a scrap with John Brett, the painter, who was Master in 1890, after which he and I became the best of friends; on another occasion Pennell, the black-and-white man, scandalized the assembly, or some of them, by pouring scorn on Raphael and his work; but most of the discussions were extremely practical, dealing with the technical processes of the various arts.

Sedding, who was the architect of Holy Trinity Church, Sloane Square, was an ardent, highly strung man, an artist of real ability, perhaps a little uncertain of purpose, except in a fixed determination to become a member of the Royal Academy, as he certainly would have been but for his untimely death in 1891. He held that architecture had got into a rut, from which it must be rescued if it was to live, and he thought that with the prestige of the Academy behind him, he was the man to do it, for he was full of enthusiasm and confidence in his own powers. We all felt his loss, for we all admired his work; it was so fresh and unconventional after

the stereotyped Gothic of the eminent architects of the time. Harry Wilson, Sedding's assistant, was one of the best draughtsmen—and within his limits, one of the most accomplished designers of that time, and I have always regretted that he drifted out of architecture into the crafts. Walter Crane, who followed Sedding, seems to me to have occupied a corner of his own in the art of his time. He was full of charming fancies, such, for instance, as his *Masque of Flowers*, and he drew with extraordinary facility, but as an artist he never seems to me to have got outside himself, or reached the higher slopes of Parnassus. His invention was graceful but not far-reaching, but he was a warm-hearted man, full of kindness and thought for others. He once expressed the hope that every member of the Guild should occupy the Master's chair in turn, though as there were then over one hundred members, the later occupants would have had to be our great-grandchildren.

So far the Master had held office for two years, but in 1890 the tenure of office was made annual, and John Brett, the painter, succeeded Crane. Brett believed that direct imitation literally accurate in every detail was the only way to paint, and he produced seascapes and landscapes of quite amazing skill so far as literal presentation went, but this view was by no means shared by all the painters, and the result was some brisk scrimmaging in which Brett, a short, solid little man with a grizzled beard, usually got the best of it, for he possessed a queer humour and an exceedingly caustic tongue. William Morris succeeded Brett in 1892, by which time the members of the Guild had increased to 168. In the year of Morris's Mastership, papers had been read by Dicksee, Solomon and Anning Bell on "The Value of Handling in Painting", and I think this must have elicited the irreverent remark of Charlie Furse, either at the Guild, or at a dinner of the New English Art Club at which old Mr. Brabazon was produced from the recesses of Sussex, but could not be induced to speak. Somebody had made light of handling, and Furse said, "If it isn't handling, what does he call it? Footling?"



Richmond contributed papers and letters on various subjects. Leighton, David Murray, Sterling Lee the Sculptor, Jacomb Hood and Thornycroft, sent letters on the subject of "Architecture from the Painters' and Sculptors' Point of View", and Cobden Sanderson read a paper on "The Book Beautiful". It was one of the regular tricks of that time to talk of "The Book Beautiful", or "The House Beautiful", instead of "The Beautiful House". Another trick was to call a preface "Foreword". Reformers never seem to be able to resist the temptation to parade their badges. Morris, who was himself responsible for "foreword", spoke on "Papers" at one of the meetings. His successor as Master was J. T. Micklethwaite, the antiquary and architect, with his spectacles, his dry manner and his high-pitched voice; Heywood Sumner followed in 1894; Onslow Ford in 1895; Graham Jackson in 1896, and among the distinguished men that followed them I find Frank Short, George Frampton, E. S. Prior, Strang, Pomeroy, Clausen and Lethaby. Heywood Sumner took an active and very useful part in the life both of the Art Workers' Guild and of the Arts and Crafts Society in its early days. Sumner had been at Eton and Christchurch, and began his artistic life as an etcher of landscapes. When I first met him at the Guild he was interested in sgraffito work, and designs of figure subjects for schools and nurseries, serious work of high intention, perhaps a little handicapped by insufficient technical training. Later on he left London, settled in Hampshire and made delightful maps of the New Forest. We used to call him the "Shepherd", partly on account of his distinguished appearance, partly on account of the fatherly care he took of us, checking our ebullience and guiding wisely our enthusiasm.

In 1892 or thereabouts I was associated with Horsley and Macartney as one of the honorary secretaries of the Guild, and in 1894 the Guild's tenancy of Barnard's Inn came to an end. The Guild obtained a lease of Clement's Inn near the Strand, and it fell to me to deal with the rather difficult business of the move from Barnard's Inn

to Clement's Inn. In consequence of this I was unable to find time to attend all the meetings of the Guild, and some ill-disposed person called attention to this. After all the trouble I had taken, and taken successfully, this seemed to me a very unsportsmanlike proceeding, and I insisted on a meeting of the Committee to have the matter out. Onslow Ford, the Sculptor, who was then Master, was in the chair, an artist of refinement and amiability, but with little capacity for handling a meeting. After a good deal of desultory discussion, Ford said in rather a helpless way that he did not see what I wanted, but old John Brett in his harsh voice said bluntly, "Blomfield wants the Committee to apologize". To do them justice they did so then and there, but I had had enough of it, and having thanked the Committee for their apology, I resigned the secretaryship, and though apparently I was still regarded as a member of the Guild, I never went to any more meetings. It was also the fact that I was prospering in my vocation and had many other things to attend to.

All the same, I always look back with gratitude and affection to the old Art Workers' Guild. In the old days we learnt much from each other and there was much good fellowship among the members. My wife and I, who had been married in 1886, were then living in 39 Woburn Square, Bloomsbury, and as this house was on the way to Barnard's Inn for people coming from the West, members of the Guild used to look in to dinner on the way to the meetings. I recollect Alfred East and John Swan—East, tall, spare, highly-strung and very vivacious; John Swan, with a great head, bright little eyes and a shock of unruly hair, burly of person and abrupt in manner. He was like a great bear, but he was a beautiful artist both in painting and modelling, and he had a stout heart. It was said of him that in his student days in Paris he had cleared out a whole atelier because something was done of which he did not approve. We used to have difficulty in making out what he said in his gruff way, but when we could, what he said was usually priceless.

I recollect also the Shrovetide revels in that busy year of 1892. William Morris, Master, was in the chair; George Frampton, who, whatever his merits as a sculptor, possessed a most droll humour, acted the little Blondel donkey, with somebody else behind, George being the head. I was bowled over in cock-fighting by T. R. Spence, architect, while E. P. Warren, the architect, an old friend of mine, watched us with solemn and immovable dignity. Many years later Frampton and I were able to help Spence at the Royal Academy.

Meanwhile, in collaboration with Inigo Thomas, I had for some time been collecting materials for a book on the old English gardens, that is, gardens as they were before the incursion and ravages of the landscape gardener towards the end of the eighteenth century. I had written scattered articles, but this was my first venture as the author of a book, and in 1892 Macmillans brought out *The Formal Garden in England*, illustrated with beautiful drawings by Inigo Thomas. J. D. Sedding also rushed out a book on *Garden Craft* just in advance of mine, and I recollect feeling a little annoyed that, though I saw him every fortnight at the Guild, he had never said a word to me about it, and had stolen a march on me, though he knew that I had been working for some time on this subject. However, in fact it made very little difference. *The Formal Garden in England* went through three editions—and led to my being constantly called in for the design of grounds and gardens. *The Formal Garden* did in fact knock out the landscape gardener and all his wicked ways, and though many mistakes have been made in scale, and in attempts to do a great deal too much with pergolas, water-pieces, temples and other devices, an advance has been made in garden design in the last forty years as marked as that in the designing of buildings.

My book provoked a violent reply from Mr. W. Robinson, entitled *Garden Design and Architects' Gardens*, in which he called Sedding's views "false and confusing art drivel" and his illustrations "childish", and charged me with

writing nonsense and attributing it to him. I pointed out in a preface to the second edition that I had done nothing of the sort, and that Mr. Robinson's irritation had betrayed him into unnecessary blunders as well as gratuitous discourtesy—altogether a pretty little controversy. I am still rather proud of that preface to the second edition of *The Formal Garden*, as an exercise in destructive criticism, and Mr. Robinson accepted it all in the right spirit, for he afterwards asked me down to his beautiful place at Gravetye. Norman Shaw wrote to congratulate me on my book: "It is excellent, and I have enjoyed it excessively; it will do a lot of good".

It was in 1892 that Lethaby also brought out his first book, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, and I find in the advance copy that Lethaby gave me on December 20, 1891 (my birthday), an inscription "from his friend, W. R. Lethaby". I have discussed this remarkable book elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> and only mention it here to suggest the state of intellectual ferment in which some of us were living. I had written an article for the *Magazine of Art* on "Some Modern Domestic Interiors"—Tadema's house, for example, and one of Shaw's in Queen's Gate, and had made some quotations from Paul Bourget, and I recollect Lethaby's delight that any architect should think in terms outside the normal professional lines—for we were already arming for the campaign against the R.I.B.A. scheme of Registration, as the corollary of their compulsory examinations. The R.I.B.A. had obtained a new Charter in 1887, and soon afterwards a Bill for the Registration of Architects was introduced by outsiders. The Institute opposed the Bill, but it appeared from speeches by prominent members of the Institute, that they opposed it because they contemplated a scheme of Registration of their own, and that this was intimately connected with the Examination system of the Institute. The idea was intensely disliked by many members of that body, including my uncle, Arthur Blomfield, Sedding, Macartney, Newton, Prior and F. M.

<sup>1</sup> *William Richard Lethaby, a Tribute.*

Simpson, and it was opposed by all the most distinguished architects outside it, Shaw, Jackson, Rowan-Anderson, Bodley, Butterfield, Champneys, Philip Webb, Gilbert Scott (No. 2), Micklethwaite, Lethaby, Ricardo, Herbert Horne, Mackmurdo and others, and also by painters and sculptors, Burne-Jones, Madox-Brown, William Morris, Herkomer, Richmond, Holman Hunt, Crane, Alfred Gilbert, Thornycroft and other well-known men. A memorial<sup>1</sup> was drawn up and sent to the Council of the Institute which began:

We the undersigned desire to record our opinion that the attempt to make architecture a close profession, either by the Bill now introduced or by any similar measure, is opposed to the interests of Architecture as a fine art.

Waterhouse, who was president of the R.I.B.A., disclaimed any such intention, and a conference was proposed between representatives of the Memorialists and the Council, but on March 4, 1891, Aston Webb, Hon. Sec., and W. White, Secretary of the Institute, wrote to Macartney and me, as acting Secretaries of the Memorialists, regretting that the terms of the Memorial rendered any discussion futile. I went down with others to the meeting of the Architectural Association to endeavour to induce them to modify their scheme of architectural training, but the A.A. had already committed themselves to the Institute examinations, and it was evident that no compromise was possible, and that the only thing to do was to fight it out. Shaw and Jackson were the leaders. I acted as their aide-de-camp and general liaison officer. I was then an Associate member of the Council of the Institute, but it was obvious that I could not sit at the Council table of the Institute and at the same time take an active part in the campaign against its proposals, so I considered it my duty to resign from the Council and the Institute. Shaw wrote to me on September 6, 1891:

I was very glad to hear that you had sent in your resigna-

<sup>1</sup> See end of this chapter for list of signatories.

tion to the R.I.B.A. and I have no doubt you feel happier and more independent. . . . It must be war now and no quarter.

Shaw proposed that each of us should put down our views on paper and publish them in pamphlet form. "I have no doubt you could do a stinger when you begin." This proposal was realized in *Architecture, a Profession or an Art*. On November 6, 1891, Shaw again wrote to me:

Of course you have read that wishy-washy twaddle of Anderson's<sup>1</sup> in yesterday's *Times*. Don't you think that *now* is the time to have a shy at them?

His advice was followed. Shaw and Jackson were editors. Jackson wrote a very able introduction stating the whole position, and an essay on "True and False Ideals in the Education of an Architect". Shaw opened with an essay on the theme "that an artist is not necessarily unpractical". Lethaby wrote on the "Builder's Art and the Craftsman"; Edward Prior on "The Profession and its Ghosts"; Richmond on "Thoughts in Three Arts", and I wrote on "Architecture and the Royal Institute of British Architects". The other contributors were Bodley, Champneys, Micklethwaite, Macartney, Newton, John Clayton (of Clayton & Bell) and Gerald Horsley. I find I ended my essay with the somewhat trenchant remark that

the old position of the Institute was safer. . . . As such, men who have since left the Institute were glad and honoured to belong to it. But it has stepped outside this useful and honourable position: in its solicitude for architects, it has aimed a dangerous and insidious blow at architecture itself.

In view of the Registration Bill passed in 1931, I regret to have to think those words are as true to-day as they were forty years ago.

*Architecture, a Profession or an Art* roused a good deal of attention, and its reception was curious. Of the Building papers the *Architect* alone gave it a cordial welcome. Statham gave it a long, discontented article in the *Builder*,

<sup>1</sup> Macvicar Anderson, Honorary Secretary with Aston Webb to the R.I.B.A.

but Statham was a man who was never content with anything, and I think the right way with him would have been Lewis Parker's approach to a very argumentative master at Sherborne who never agreed with anyone. So Parker one day went up to him and said, apropos of nothing, "Jones, I differ from you". The *National Observer* thought that the Institute and the Public were both hopeless, and said, "Messrs. Jackson and Blomfield, sane as they are, do but waste their breath in attempting to conciliate or to confute the natural enemies of their craft". The *Pall Mall Gazette* called it "an admirable volume". The *Times* regarded the whole discussion as "purely academical", and said that the "public wanted architecture to be both a profession and an art", a characteristic effort of *The Times* of 1892, which missed the whole point of the discussion and left it where it was. By far the best account of the whole position was given in the *Spectator* for November 19, 1892, in a long and able article written, I believe, by D. S. MacColl, in which it was suggested that some of the essays were not to the point, and that Jackson and I, as "the most business-like of the writers", ought to draw up a summary of the points at issue. Jackson, however, had already done this in the Introduction.

The next step was to obtain a considered review in one of the magazines. Clayton knew Knowles of the *Nineteenth Century*, and Knowles having once been an Architect was quite ready to take the matter up, but who was to write the article? Jackson would not do it. Lethaby and I suggested MacColl, but it appeared that Knowles had a high opinion of Lord Grimthorpe's ability and supposed MacColl to be Canon MacColl (of "Bulgarian atrocities" fame), and Lord Grimthorpe wrote the article. Shaw's comment is interesting. He wrote to me on November 15, 1892:

Of course the worst of Lord Grim is that he will bang us about the head as much as our enemies . . . it is past his powers to be anything but brutal: still a good discussion and publicity is better than nothing.

Shaw's forecast was accurate. Lord Grimthorpe was more anxious to show that architects did not know their business half so well as he did, than he was to reinforce our position.

The result of our efforts was to thrust Registration into the background; it postponed the evil day for forty years. Moreover, it very definitely called attention to the fact that architecture as an art was losing ground and was being swallowed up by professionalism. The break-away undoubtedly arrested this tendency and restored architecture, at any rate for a time. We younger men were fortunate in having Shaw and Jackson as our leaders. Norman Shaw was one of the ablest men I have ever met. He was very tall, thin, clean-shaven, high in the cheek-bone, with a hard and very intelligent grey eye. I sometimes thought of him as an old grey wolf, the leader of the pack, for he was a man of commanding presence and strong individuality, and possessed an extremely acute brain, quite apart from his very remarkable gifts as an artist, for there can be little doubt that it was his genius that revolutionized the domestic architecture of this country. He was always very good to me—humorous and sympathetic. On one occasion I had entered a limited competition for a new girls' school at Hammersmith of which Shaw was the Assessor, and had great difficulty in recovering my perspective, which I wanted to send to the next Royal Academy Exhibition. I called on Shaw and explained my point. We did not make much progress and found ourselves looking hard into each other's eyes for some seconds, in silence, when Shaw with a twinkle in his eye said, "You mean to have that drawing", and when I said "Yes", he smiled in that delightful way he had, said "All right, you shall have it", and it was sent me next day. Shaw was a great architect and a man of fine and rare character. When he died on November 17, 1912, I was President of the R.I.B.A. and wrote this note in the *Journal*:

All who ever came into contact with Norman Shaw will remember his most fascinating personality, his genuine and chivalrous friendship, his kindness to younger men, and the



extraordinary influence that he had in stimulating them to a high and worthy conception of the Art of Architecture. Any who came to him for advice went away with a sounder and more sober estimate of their own achievements, and yet cheered on to persevere and pursue their own ideal. Norman Shaw was an artist, absolute and ingrained. To scholarship and learning he made no claim, but he possessed a mind of rare distinction, a shrewdness and clarity of intelligence that illuminated the darkest corner of any difficulty, made everything seem delightfully simple and easy, and did, in fact, suggest the way out to those less favoured than himself with resource and quick imagination. A man who disclaimed any powers as an orator or writer, he was in fact an admirable speaker, and few men have ever written more charming and characteristic letters. He handled every subject with an irresistible lightness of touch, letting his humour play on it, yet never losing sight of the essential purpose of his writing. To borrow a term from horsemanship, he had beautiful hands.

There has been a singular completeness about the career of this most distinguished architect. An artist, and always an artist, he was indifferent to honours . . . he was equally indifferent to "Society" in the technical sense of the term. His whole power was concentrated on the art that he loved, and to which he dedicated his life, and from the ideals that he formed in early life he never swerved. His has been a fine life, finely conceived and finely lived.

I am glad to have been able to dedicate to him before he died the two first volumes of my *History of French Architecture*, "in admiration of his genius and example".

I had also a great regard for Jackson, a gentleman, a scholar and a very able architect. When I was an undergraduate he was designing all those new buildings at Oxford on which his considerable reputation mainly rests; and though the fashion has shifted far away from his manner of design, I still think that his additions to Trinity, and the front of Brasenose facing the High, are among the best of all the modern work done in Oxford. Jackson was tall and thin, rather awkward of figure, though he was an old rowing man in his Oxford days, and in face he had

a curious resemblance to the portraits of Philibert De L'Orme. I always found him a delightful man to meet and work with. As Treasurer of the Academy he did excellent work for that body, but some of his colleagues thought that he was too much of a don. Perhaps what they did not like in him was that he was a well-educated man, a scholar of considerable attainment, and of wider culture than they possessed themselves. Painters and sculptors sometimes seem to suspect a colleague who can write reasonable English without mistakes in grammar or spelling as having a mean advantage over the inarticulate artist. Yet the first President of the Royal Academy wrote admirable English, and we still give his "Discourses" as a prize.

# LIST OF SIGNATORIES OF THE MEMORIAL TO THE PRESIDENT AND COUNCIL OF THE R.I.B.A. OPPOSING REGISTRATION, 1891

## *Members of the Institute*

Sir A. W. Blomfield, A.R.A.	* E. J. May
Reginald Blomfield	* Mervyn Macartney
J. M. Brydon	* Ernest Newton
W. D. Caröe	A. Beresford Pite
John Douglas	* Edward S. Prior
W. M. Fawcett	John Oldrid Scott
Charles Ferguson	* J. D. Sedding
C. Hodgson Fowler	George Sherrin
Charles Hadfield	* F. M. Simpson
G. C. Horsley	A. E. Street
Edmund Kirby	John J. Stevenson
William Leiper	

Those marked with an asterisk resigned their membership of the Institute.

## *Not Members of the Institute*

R. Rowan Anderson	Somers Clarke
John Bentley	Horace Field
G. F. Bodley, A.R.A.	Thomas Garner
W. Butterfield	Herbert Horne
Basil Champneys	T. G. Jackson

W. R. Lethaby  
A. H. Mackmurdo  
Wm. C. Marshall  
J. T. Micklethwaite  
J. H. Middleton  
Sydney Mitchell

H. Ricardo  
G. Gilbert Scott<sup>1</sup>  
R. Norman Shaw, R.A.  
Thackeray Turner  
E. Prioleau Warren

The following, who were not architects, added their signatures:

L. Alma-Tadema, R.A.  
H. H. Armstead, R.A.  
John Brett, A.R.A.  
Thomas Brook, R.A.  
Ford Madox Brown  
E. Burne-Jones, A.R.A.  
J. B. Burgess, R.A.  
John R. Clayton  
Walter Crane  
E. Onslow Ford, A.R.A.  
F. Garrard  
Alfred Gilbert, A.R.A.

Hubert Herkomer, R.A.  
W. Holman Hunt  
Selwyn Images  
Sterling Lee  
Herbert Marshall  
William Morris  
James Powell  
W. B. Richmond, A.R.A.  
Briton Riviere, R.A.  
George Simonds  
Heywood Sumner  
Hamo Thornycroft, R.A.

<sup>1</sup> Father of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, R.A.

## CHAPTER VII

The Birmingham Congress—Conway—The Century Guild—The Arts and Crafts Society: Morris, Sanderson—Kenton and Co.

WHEN I think of the late eighties and early nineties I am amazed at the intellectual activity among the younger men of that time. Here were we architects, doing all we could to stir up the Institute and to re-establish Architecture as an Art, and the New English Art Club was enthusiastically trying to upset the Academy and make a fresh start in painting, in both cases a little overrunning the lines, but in both cases keeping the ball moving. The movement all round was a reaction against the placid contentment of Victorian Art. Nor was it confined to Architecture and Painting. The National Association for the Advancement of Art and its Application to Industry was already hard at work. Its first Congress was held at Liverpool in 1888, the second at Edinburgh in 1889 and the third from November 4 to November 8, 1890, at Birmingham. I attended the Birmingham Congress, and recollect that the place was so crowded with hopeful members that George Simonds, the sculptor, could not get a bed, and Martin Conway (now Lord Conway), being a man of infinite resource and good humour, slept in his sleeping-bag. No less than thirty-two addresses were given. J. E. Hodgson, R.A., was president, a painter now almost forgotten, but a cultivated and thoughtful man. T. G. Jackson was president of the section of Architecture, George Simonds of the section of Sculpture, W. B. Richmond, then an A.R.A., of the section of Painting, and A. H. Mackmurdo, another half-forgotten reformer of those days, of the section of Applied Art. I

find that Mr. J. W. Tonks gave an address in this section on Art as applied to Jewellery and Personal Ornament.

Aston Webb gave a sensible but not very stimulating address on "Architecture and Education", calling attention to the merits of the R.I.B.A. scheme of examinations, and urging the necessity of co-ordinating the various centres of art training and bringing them into touch. Webb was of course a strong Institute man, being at that time one of its honorary secretaries, but he was genuinely anxious to develop the systematic training of architects, and, I take it, accepted Registration as from his point of view its inevitable corollary. I read a paper on "Architect and Artist" in Jackson's section. I think the phrasing was good, but it did not lead anywhere, or rather, it repeated what we were saying elsewhere. I think it was characteristic of these meetings that we talked a great deal, but came to no agreement. Most of what was said was just beating the air, the usual result of congresses and conferences, that seem to me to serve no useful purpose except to enable people to let off steam and shelve the essential question.

Meanwhile, a far more important movement was beginning in London. Towards the latter part of the Victorian era the decorative arts were in a very bad way. They were in the hands, not of artists, but of tradesmen, large firms of upholsterers, furniture makers, jewellers and so on, and the individual artist working on his own had little chance of breaking through this ring, and getting known to the public. The Century Guild had been founded in 1886 by two remarkable men, who were ahead of their time, A. H. Mackmurdo and Herbert Horne. They started a quarterly magazine, *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*, beautifully printed, with a very finely designed cover by Selwyn Image, the poet and artist, which I see from the signature was made by him and cut on wood in 1884. The preface to the first number, which appeared in January 1886, says:

The aim of the Century Guild is to render all branches of art the sphere no longer of the tradesman but of the artist. It would restore building, decoration, glass painting, pottery,

wood-carving and metal work to their right place beside painting and sculpture. By so placing them they would once more be regarded as legitimate and honourable expressions of the artistic spirit, and would stand in their true relation not only to sculpture and painting but to the drama, to music and to literature.

Horne and Mackmurdo were hoping to insist on that unity of the arts which became the war-cry of the Art Workers' Guild, and the inclusion of music is significant. Three concerts of music "written by various composers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to be played upon the Viols, Lute and Harpsichord" were given at the studio of Horne and Mackmurdo, 20 Fitzroy Street, in February, March and April 1892, and the players were Mr., Mrs. and Miss Arnold Dolmetsch, Mr. J. A. Muns, Mrs. Fuller Maitland and Miss Ethel Davis. The "Voice" was Miss Florence Monk, and Arnold Dolmetsch took the treble viol and the lute. It was at one of these concerts, or a more important one on the same lines given in Barnard's Inn, that I first met Roger Fry. The work of the Century Guild was more or less absorbed in the Arts and Crafts Society. Horne left England soon afterwards, settled in Florence, and dedicated the rest of his life to the collection of works of art and to writing a monumental *Life of Botticelli*. He was a strange creature, a scholar, a poet and an artist, a man of rare gifts but without ambition. Mackmurdo once told me that Horne liked me because of "the way I swung my sword".

In 1887-8 the Arts and Crafts Society was founded. Walter Crane was the first President, and the Committee included Burne-Jones, Morris, Sedding, Harry Bates (the sculptor), De Morgan and Cobden Sanderson. The first exhibition was held in the autumn of 1888 at the New Gallery, and in a note in the *Portfolio* in that year I find the following passage concerning the aims of the young Society:

Many of our artistic thinkers, working designers and craftsmen have felt that the false relations between art and manu-

facture, the absorption of the personal element in production by machinery, and the merging of the men who think and make behind the medium of the men who sell, have been stultifying the re-awakening desire to make life beautiful and fit.

Short essays on the Arts were printed with the Catalogue, and I find that in 1889 Madox Brown wrote on "Mural Painting", Morris on "Dyeing", Heywood Sumner on "Sgraffito", and I wrote on "Book Illustration and Decoration", an essay, as far as I recollect, following closely the teaching of Morris in regard to typography and the printed page.

Lectures were also given in the evening, and the lectures given during the Fifth Exhibition in 1896 were published in a pretty little volume entitled *Art and Life*. Cobden Sanderson lectured on "Art and Life", Lethaby on "Beautiful Cities", Crane on "The Decoration of Public Buildings". I lectured on "Public Spaces, Parks and Gardens", and Halsey Ricardo on "Colour in the Architecture of Cities". Ricardo, like a brave man, put his ideas into execution in the house that he designed for Mr. Debenham in Kensington, which was described at the time as

A little blue house for Peter,  
And a little green house for Paul.

1896 was a memorable year for the Society, for it lost two of the greatest of its members, first Madox Brown, and then William Morris, its president, who had died on the opening day of the Exhibition, October 3, 1896. The death of William Morris was a great blow to us all, for he was not an old man when he died. I had constantly seen him, first as one of the secretaries of the Art Workers' Guild when he was Master in 1892, and again when he was President of the Arts and Crafts Society. The last time I saw him was at Charing Cross Station not long before he died. He and Mrs. Morris were going somewhere in Kent. The lady never said a word, but I had a long talk with Morris, and all that I saw and knew of him deepened

my admiration for this splendid man. He asked me down to Hammersmith, where he showed me his books and talked to me in his garden, easily, naturally and without any pomp and ceremony, and I came away feeling that my boyish admiration for the author of *The Earthly Paradise* had not been misplaced. Morris was too much of a poet and too lofty an idealist to take the lead in direct action, but his influence on the thought of artists of his time, and the pre-Raphaelite movement, are two of the most remarkable facts of the latter part of the nineteenth century. It is an odd fact, by the way, that that robust but entirely Philistine college, Exeter College, Oxford, should hold the record in artists. The Rev. William Peters, R.A., a successful and clever painter of the eighteenth century, was an M.A. of Exeter College under rather unusual circumstances. Morris and Burne-Jones were at Exeter together, and, *longo intervallo*, I myself am an R.A., M.A. and Hon. Fellow of that venerable College. Wadham produced T. G. Jackson, Brasenose had Walter Pater, almost hiding in his rooms, Magdalen in the sixties included John Addington Symonds among its Fellows, and in my time harboured Oscar Wilde, but so far as creative artists are concerned, the record of Exeter stands by itself.

In 1896 T. J. Cobden Sanderson was Honorary Secretary to the Arts and Crafts Society and, after Morris had gone, the most active man on the Committee. He was a little man, clean-shaven, spare of figure and quick in his movements. The lectures used to be given in the New Gallery, and I still recall the entry of Oscar Wilde and Cobden Sanderson when we had all assembled—Wilde, large, flabby, pale of face and dull of eye, rather an awkwardly built man, wearing a picturesque sort of opera cape, and Sanderson dancing along behind him in his workaday clothes, a blue linen shirt and blue collar.

I was associated with Cobden Sanderson in the secretarial work of the Society, and in 1896 we became next-door neighbours at Hampstead. My lease of 39 Woburn Square came to an end in 1893, and as we had three young children, we



determined to leave Bloomsbury. Sanderson wanted to build himself a house at Hampstead and came to me for the design, but we could not find any site small enough for the purpose, and one day he said to me: "You want a house. Why not buy a site with me and build a semi-detached house on it, one for you and one for me?" Sanderson, who was an old inhabitant of Hampstead and knew the ground, took me for a walk along the causeway that runs from the White Stone Pond to the Spaniards, and that splendid walk, with the view far away into Kent, beyond St. Paul's, decided me. We bought a plot of ground in Frognal, and there I built the two houses, in one of which we have lived ever since. Sanderson afterwards sold his house at a profit and retired to his Doves Bindery at Hammersmith. He was a strange creature, highly strung and excitable, liable to sudden violent rages, yet a man of great personal charm when one really knew him. As an artist he was a man of fine taste and a beautiful craftsman in his chosen art of book-binding. He belonged to an older generation, but, like most of us, he was influenced by William Morris, and though he possessed an acute and subtle intellect, his visionary views of life made him rather unpractical. Somehow I think he ought to have done more than he actually succeeded in doing, and in this he resembled William Lethaby. In both cases it was their personality, their remoteness from others, and a certain lofty idealism that made them stand out as men of mark in their generation.

The New Gallery, after an interesting existence, was turned into a picture palace, and the Arts and Crafts Society has from time to time sought the hospitality of the Royal Academy. That body has always been friendly to the Society; indeed I can recollect that a good many years ago the possibility of the Arts and Crafts being represented among the members of the Academy was seriously discussed, but was found to be impracticable. The last strenuous effort of the Society was made in 1916, when that restless genius, Harry Wilson, and his devoted colleagues converted

the galleries of Burlington House into a series of Byzantine halls and chapels, and produced one of the most remarkable shows in the history of the Society. But fate was against it. This was the third autumn of the war and the thoughts of most of us were far away from Burlington House, and this great effort passed unnoticed. Since then, and since the war, the whole trend of things has been against the aims of the Arts and Crafts Society. The fashion of the day which the post-war generation is pursuing is antagonistic to the aims of Morris and those who followed him. When the ideal of a room is based on the operating theatre of a hospital, when the furniture is of steel, and the walls are decorated with weird geometrical diagrams and colours arranged like the old kaleidoscope, there is little opportunity for the handcrafts, for such textiles as were produced by Morris & Co., for such furniture as was designed by Jack, Lethaby and others, based on the best traditions of English furniture. I fear the Arts and Crafts must rest on its laurels, content with having broken through the tradition of commercialism and international exhibitions.

One result of the movement, however, in which I was concerned is worth recording, and that is the firm of Kenton & Co., which enjoyed a brief but glorious existence of just two years. Morris & Co. had shown in the beautiful designs of Philip Webb and Jack, his draughtsman and assistant, what might be done in modern furniture. At that time (I am speaking of the eighties) the accepted furniture consisted of supposed reproductions of French and Italian furniture of the sixteenth century, with occasional experiments in Neo-Gothic. These reproductions were mere travesties of the originals, and had not even the merit of being strictly accurate reproductions of old furniture, worm-holes and all, in which a flourishing industry was to arise a few years later. In collecting exhibits for the shows of the Arts and Crafts Society members of the Committee were deputed to visit the principal London shops and see what they could get. The results were most disappointing. The furniture was bad, the tradesmen would

give us no information, and in one large shop in Regent Street the manager was extremely rude and, had he dared to do so, would have ejected Macartney and me then and there. With Lethaby, as usual our fount of inspiration, we decided to make ourselves into a firm of furniture designers and makers. The other members were Gimson and Barnsley, a retired Colonel of cavalry who was a friend of Macartney and keenly interested in furniture, and Stephen Webb, a clever draughtsman, skilled in designing intarsia work in the manner of the Italian Renaissance for Collinson & Locke, the well-known furniture people in Oxford Street. We each put up one hundred pounds of capital except the Colonel, who put up two hundred, and Stephen Webb, who put up nothing at all and left us soon afterwards. We took an excellent workshop over some stables at the back of Bedford Row, employed four or five of the best workmen we could get—and they were quite first-rate—and bought our own materials. I once had about fifteen varieties of fine veneer, snake-work, tulip wood, coromandel and others. We used to meet in each other's rooms, undertake designs of our own choice and invention more or less in turn, except the Colonel, who held, as it were, a watching brief on the whole proceeding. Each man was responsible solely for his own design and its execution, and it was delightful to go to the shop and see one's design growing into shape in the hands of our skilful cabinet-makers. We made no attempt to interfere with each other's idiosyncrasies. Lethaby's and Gimson's inventions ran to simple designs of admirable form in oak. I recollect a mirror frame, rather Persian in design, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, by Sidney Barnsley and much admired by Leighton. Macartney followed the elegant motives of the eighteenth century, and I indulged myself in solid rosewood. I still have a large settee of rosewood, with fine cane seat and back, which we priced at the modest sum of fifty pounds, which meant only about 15 per cent profit.

At the end of our first year we held an exhibition in the

hall of Barnard's Inn. It was very successful; the great Leighton approved of our efforts, so did fine connoisseurs such as my old friend William Alexander of Aubrey House, and we sold about seven hundred pounds worth of furniture. So far we had reason to be well pleased with the result, but no profit was forthcoming, and we came to the conclusion that if we were to carry on with any chance of making any profit from our labours we must raise another thousand pounds of capital among ourselves. It never seems to have occurred to us that we could easily have raised this sum outside, but some of us did realize that the time had come to make a definite choice between the practice of architecture and the practice of designing and making furniture. The Colonel had had enough of it in any case. Gimson and Barnsley decided to carry on by themselves, which they did with work that has now become famous. Lethaby, Macartney and I decided to cut our loss and concentrate on the practice of architecture. By the time we had discharged all our liabilities, we had no assets left but the furniture and our stock of woods. The latter was sold to a designer of furniture who never paid for it, and the furniture we divided among ourselves, each selecting the pieces that he wanted up to the capital amount due to him. With rare exceptions each man chose his own designs. Lethaby honoured me by choosing an oak cabinet of my design with an inlay of rabbits eating lettuce. I chose a charming little writing-table designed by Macartney, and for the rest took a snake-work mirror and my rosewood settee. I recollect the difficulty I had in finding anybody who could do the fine caning of that settee, and the solid rosewood arms I had to model myself in clay, as their curves and other nuances of the design were beyond the possibility of demonstration by drawings. This settee was exhibited at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition of 1916 at Burlington House, and a critic, in expressing his admiration, also remarked on the delightful surprise of finding such things designed by a Royal Academician, though, as MacColl once said in one of his articles, even

Academicians do not hide behind the umbrella-stand to murder their enemies, and even Academicians can occasionally design.

Kenton's was a brave venture, and I have never regretted it. It gave us some practical insight into the designing of furniture, and it brought us into direct touch with materials, which Lethaby always insisted was the one and only road to architectural salvation.<sup>1</sup> I also think we were right in returning to the practice of architecture. To succeed we should have had to give the whole of our time to Kenton's, and, after all, we were architects, or hoped to be, and Macartney's practice and mine were steadily growing and required all our energies. Moreover, *ἐκ παρόργου*. I was already engaged on a considerable undertaking, a history of Renaissance Architecture in England, a work urgently needed owing to the wide misunderstanding that prevailed as to the meaning of the Renaissance in this country.

<sup>1</sup> I note, by the way, that in the programme of the Art Workers' Guild for 1931, one of the Reserve subjects is "Co-operation of Architects and Craftsmen". The subject that agitated us forty years ago seems still to interest our successors.

## CHAPTER VIII

“English Renaissance Architecture”—Country-house Practice—Shooting, Cricket—Rye—Fairford—E. A. Abbey.

IN 1892 Walter Armstrong, the well-known art critic, invited me on behalf of Messrs. Bell, to undertake a history of English Architecture. He saw some of my pen-and-ink drawings and was good enough to say they were very “vital”, though looking back on them now I do not think much of them myself. I told him that in any case the subject was far too big for one man, but that I should be happy to deal with English Architecture from the time of Henry VIII to the end of the eighteenth century, on which I had already collected materials and written some articles in the *Portfolio*. For Mediaeval Architecture I recommended Edward Prior, who wrote a fine book on it for Messrs. Bell, well illustrated by Gerald Horsley. The terms Bell offered me were satisfactory, and I set to work on my book, which was published by Bell in 1897 under the title of *A History of English Renaissance Architecture in England, 1500 to 1800*. Bell did their work well, the critics were kind and the book was very well received,<sup>1</sup> so much so, indeed, that, acting on the advice of my old friend R. S. Wornum, I found it necessary to issue a small and abridged edition in 1900, in order to stake out my claim to the result of my own researches in a field which so far had been very imperfectly explored. Before the appearance of my book,

<sup>1</sup> I have lost the notice in *The Times*. The *Standard* said: “Mr. Blomfield writes well and with admirable lucidity, and has acquitted himself of a great task . . . with good judgement and an educated taste”. The *Daily Chronicle* was generous: “Mr. Blomfield’s book is the most thorough and scholarly contribution to the literature of English architecture which we remember for many years”.

though scattered treatises had appeared on individual architecture and buildings, and Mr. Gotch had produced his fine series of photographs with brief explanatory text, there was in fact no systematic account of the rise and development of Neo-Classic in England. Mr. Gotch, who had entitled his volume *Architecture of the Renaissance in England*,<sup>1</sup> had limited the term Renaissance to architecture of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, that is, to what is usually called "Elizabethan and Jacobean". This limitation appeared to me a misreading of history. My object was to show that the English Renaissance was not an isolated and short-lived change of fashion, but was part of a vast movement that spread all over civilized Europe, and was the inevitable result of far-reaching causes which precluded a return to the motives and ideas that lay at the back of mediæval art. I pointed out that, in England, the architecture of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was only the first timid venture in the "new manner" in our distant island, that it was the genius of Inigo Jones that revealed to our countrymen the real meaning of the return to classical architecture, and that its development, on the lines that he laid down, steadily advanced almost to the end of the eighteenth century, when it was broken down by the Romantic movement, which destroyed the last vestige of genuine tradition, and opened the flood-gates of nineteenth-century revivalism. Our "new architects" will probably not admit it in view of my criticisms of their efforts, but in point of fact, by opening fire on the revivalists and the silly sentimentality of the last century, I provided them with an open way along which architecture might advance. Unfortunately, they have ignored the teaching of history and taken the wrong turning.

I greatly enjoyed writing my history. My pursuit of materials led me into out-of-the-way corners of history, and acquainted me with the actual buildings themselves in different places in England. It also introduced me to various excellent clients. At that time Sir Henry Edwardes,

<sup>1</sup> Batsford, 1894.

a bachelor baronet, known to his friends as "the Bart", was living at Wotton Hall in Derbyshire, and had consulted me about the design of his garden. I used to go and stay with him, and he was excellent company, very shrewd, with a wide knowledge of men and things. I recollect sitting in his library one evening after an excellent dinner enjoying a first-rate cigar, with occasional attention to a very choice old brandy on the table beside me. The library was a long room full of fine books, and the old gentleman stumped up and down talking hard. I forget what he said, but recollect that having finished his own glass of brandy at one end of the room, he came back past me, and finished mine in his stride, and without a pause in his talk. It was to Sir Henry Edwardes that I owed my first really important work. The east wing of Brocklesby Park was burnt out in 1898, and Lord Yarborough wrote to Sir Henry Edwardes to ask what he had better do. Sir Henry told him to come to me, and soon afterwards brought Lord Yarborough to my office in the Temple, and while we discussed Sir Henry's garden, Lord Yarborough sat quietly by, and no doubt sized me up. Soon afterwards Lord Yarborough wrote to me asking me to go down to Brocklesby in Lincolnshire to see about rebuilding the east wing, and he told me later that Sir Henry had been good enough to say that I had written the best book on architecture ever written. It was nothing of the sort, but it was a book that was wanted and I had enjoyed writing it.

Brocklesby Park was typical of that delightful country-house practice which I was fortunate enough to have built up before the war, and which since the war has ceased to exist. Owners or purchasers of historic places used to call me in to add to or recondition their houses. Presumably they thought well of me, or they would not have called me in, and so there was no difficulty in understanding one another. Friendly relations were established, and I recall many a pleasant day's shooting given me by my employers, or "clients", as it is considered proper to call them. At



Brocklesby I was able not only to rebuild the fine east wing on the old lines, but to effect some considerable improvements in the plan of the house, and also to lay out the east garden and the approach, the water-pieces and the terrace on the south side. Incidentally I discovered in the orangery that fine group of Neptune by Bernini, which had been sold to Thomas Jenkins, an English banker, at the end of the eighteenth century, and found its way to Brocklesby, where it stood forgotten and unknown, till I identified it by the drawing in Frascchetti's fine book on Bernini. Lady Yarborough had excellent taste and a high standard of attainment, and if she was sometimes a little imperious, we both had the same object in view, and agreed entirely in the end. Lord Yarborough was the most considerate of all the many kind people with whom I have been brought into contact in the course of my professional work. He mounted me on more than one occasion, used to ask me to Brocklesby to shoot, and has remained my friend ever since the old days at Brocklesby Park over thirty years ago.

Apethorpe, in Northamptonshire, was another case in point. When Sir Leonard Brassey bought this beautiful old place from Lord Westmorland, it was in a bad state of repair and extremely inconvenient. A great deal of directly practical work had to be done in the way of heating and sanitation, and the accommodation had to be almost entirely reconsidered. Apethorpe is one of the most important Jacobean houses in England, and any alteration in its architecture had to be done with extreme care and consideration. Here again I was greatly helped by Sir Leonard and Lady Violet Brassey, always the kindest of hosts. Between us we completed the work, laid out a new water garden, a new forecourt and approach, and various other works, and now again I was given some excellent days' shooting. My experience was the same elsewhere—at Drakehowe in Derbyshire, with Sir Robert Gresley; at Godinton in Kent, with Mr. and Mrs. Ashley Dodd; at Mystole near Canterbury, with my wife's uncle, William Pomfret,

member for the Ashford division of East Kent at the time; at Garnons in Herefordshire, with Sir John Cotterell; at Wyphurst in Surrey, with Sir Charles Chadwyck Healey, who was Chancellor of four dioceses, and whose son Hilary was once my pupil. At Knowlton in Kent, a fine red brick Jacobean house which then belonged to Elmer Speed, I designed a formal garden on the east side of the house, and when we came to dig up the ground the lines of my design were found to follow almost exactly the main lines of the seventeenth-century garden.

I think it must have been somewhere about 1900 that I was called in by Lord Binning to transform and recondition the great house of Mellerstain, near Kelso. It was a huge place, said to have 365 windows, and consisted of a large central block designed by one of the Adams, with two smaller blocks of an older date on either side of the fore-court. Along the south side of the centre block there is a fine suite of rooms with the original Adam ceilings in excellent order, which retain their original coloured backgrounds of delicate tints of blue, pink and green. But the house had long been unoccupied and I was to make it habitable. As usual in Scotland there was an attractive walled-in kitchen garden at some distance from the house, but no garden near it. Lord and Lady Binning were enthusiastic on the matter of garden design, and with their help I laid out an important garden here with terraces, a crypto-porticus, parterres and water-pieces, and my scheme was to have been carried on to an immense grass hemisphere overlooking the lake at the foot of the hill, in the best manner of Lenôtre, but we had to abandon this; indeed it would have required the resources of Louis XIV to carry out the whole of my design. I used often to go to Mellerstain to discuss details with Lady Binning, and shoot with his Lordship. Lord Binning had been Colonel of the Blues, and I first made his acquaintance in the Albany Barracks soon after the appearance of *The Formal Garden in England*. He was a good shot, a very fine rider and one of the most delightful men I ever met, humorous, witty, with

an attractive hint of romance about him, which he himself used to explain by reference to some old legend of a remote gypsy strain in the family.

Heathfield Park in Sussex was another house that I constantly visited. It was here that that stout old warrior, Elliot of Gibraltar, built himself a house and ended his days, and when William Alexander bought the place, the house was a rather ugly building with a pleasant loggia of columns on the south side, stucco walls and a flat-pitched slate roof. Instead of facing south where there was a glorious view over falling ground and the Weald of Sussex, right away to the South Downs, the drawing-room faced north, and the plan was extremely inconvenient. We turned the house round, stripped the stucco which revealed some excellent brickwork, formed a new attic storey with a tile roof, and converted the house into a normal Georgian country house. From the house the ground fell away to the hammer ponds surrounded by beech trees, a series of water-pieces dammed up to obtain the power necessary to work the great tilt hammers of the old ironworks. Here we used to get excellent duck shooting at which my host used to appear, with quite unsuitable clothes, but a most genial manner. He never shot. What he liked was to ramble about under the beech trees and talk to a congenial companion. I had a great regard for him as an old friend, and a high admiration for his judgement, for he was a man of unerring taste, and the finest connoisseur I have ever come across. All my memories of Heathfield Park are pleasant ones, except for that last sad tragedy of the end, for he was killed falling down the basement stairs.

Chequers, now occupied by successive Prime Ministers as a country house, through the generous gift of Lord Lee of Fareham, is another great house with which I had to deal. I first saw Chequers soon after the publication of *The Formal Garden in England* (1892), when I was consulted by the owner, Mr. Bertram Astley, about the garden. The house at that date was extremely ugly, and very inconvenient. It had been covered with stucco about a hundred

years ago, when the landscape gardeners were laying it down that red brick was a blot on the landscape. I was wandering round the house, when I came upon a piece of loose stucco, and saw underneath it some beautiful brickwork of the time of Henry VIII, the date of the original building. I called Astley's attention to this, and amid much enthusiasm the whole house-party set to work picking off the stucco, and clearing about 100 square feet of fine brickwork like the older parts of Hampton Court. The inside was as bad as the outside. The kitchen occupied one of the best parts of the house in the south-west corner, and in order to reach the dining-room in the north-east corner the servants either had to cross an open court or burrow underground by a passage through the cellars, and there was a legend that a footman had broken his neck by tumbling down the stairs. We more or less replanned the house.\* The kitchen was cleared away, and a new kitchen and offices built, to the west of the house. On the space occupied by the old kitchen a new dining-room was formed, and the courtyard was covered in, and converted into a large Central Hall, the full height of the house. Lord and Lady Lee took the closest personal interest in the alterations, and scrupulous care was taken that everything was true to the type of the original sixteenth-century house, even to forming protuberances on some of the ceilings, to induce people to believe that the ceilings had been there ever since the Chancellor of the Exchequer built the house, in the time of Henry VIII.

I might easily extend the list of places in the country where I was called in to deal with the house and grounds, and where I received the same kindly entertainment. I will only mention the last great house with which I was concerned just before the war—Wretham, in Norfolk, which I designed for Saxton Noble. It was supposed in the first instance to be just a shooting box, but it gradually grew into a large country house, and I worked out the whole design and its decorative design with Noble, and that very clever lady, Mrs. Saxton Noble. We used to go down to

Wretham on Friday evenings, to shoot on Saturdays, and sometimes on Mondays, and there I had the best shooting I have ever had, for the Wretham shooting was quite first-rate and Saxton Noble the most hospitable of men. For various reasons I gave up shooting in 1916, and what I have missed since are those quiet stands by the cover side waiting for the birds to come over, the colours of the woodland, and all the wild life that one saw in the woods and that it is difficult to see in any other way. As to my shooting, some days I shot well and others quite deplorably. Once many years ago I was shooting on a moor in Yorkshire with only one gun. I fired fifteen shots from my butt, gathered thirteen grouse, lost one and missed one, and the man in the next butt came across and congratulated me on a fine effort. On the other hand, shooting one day at Garnons with Sir John Cotterell, I do not think I hit anything at all in the morning, and even the beaters were murmuring to each other, "We ain't downhearted", and so on. After an excellent lunch at which I did myself well, I felt better, and, with the careless ease of repletion, laid well forward at the birds, which reduced the ignominy of my morning's display. After all, it is the glorious uncertainty of sport that gives it much of its interest and makes an English sportsman what he is. The concentration of all one's energies on the attainment of mechanical excellence in one specialized form of sport is not our idea of it at all. One does one's best, but a game is a game after all, and not a form of slavery, or even a skilled technical exercise as cricket is now becoming, with the result of one run in twenty minutes on a batsman's wicket in the last Eton and Harrow match. Some consolation was to be found next day in the glorious innings that F. R. Brown played for Surrey against Kent, when he knocked up 168 runs out of 206 scored in two hours, and never gave a chance. *The Times* said: "His was, in fact, a magnificent apology for the lost art of straight driving and merciless treatment of over or short pitched balls". That is how cricket should be played.

I have always been keen on games. I played cricket from

the age of six or seven when my father introduced me to its rudiments in the vicarage garden at Dartford, till the age of sixty-seven, when playing in a parents' match at Rye, young Wreford Brown, aged twelve, bowling with an undersized ball, pitched a beautiful length ball on my leg stump which came across and whipped off the bail of the off-stump. In my student days after Oxford I gave up cricket for five or six years, as it took up too much of the time which I wanted for the pursuit of architecture, but after I was married I began again, and played every year in the Tenterden Cricket Week, until I transferred my cricket to Rye. One stroke I made in a match at Tenterden remains in my memory. The ball was a fair length ball on the leg stump. It seemed to me that I did little more than flick at the ball, but before we had crossed that ball was rattling against the palings by the road more than a hundred yards away. Francis Ford, who was in with me, said it was a stroke worthy of Gilbert Jessop, and I am still proud of that stroke. On the other hand, when I played for the Gentlemen of Sussex at Lewes somewhere about 1912, I was sent in first or second wicket and felt in tremendous form, but I was bowled for 1 in the first innings, and 0 in the second. At Rye I used regularly to captain our team in the Rye Week, and among my papers I came across a cutting from an old number of the *South-Eastern Advertiser*, in which there is an illustration of myself leading my team off the field, followed by Francis Ford, the prettiest left-handed bat that I have ever seen, and Montmorency, the old Oxford blue and plus four golfer. It was on this occasion that "Monty" was said to have gone round the Rye Golf Course in 72, all fours, the fact being that it was not the golf course, but the cricket ground, and his 72 was made up of 18 fours to the boundary. It was in this week also that Albert Trott made one of the most remarkable hundreds I have ever seen. To put it plainly he was quite drunk, but extremely cheerful; he admitted to anybody within range that he could not see the ball, and then proceeded to hit it out of the ground.

My best effort at Rye was an innings of 74 in one of our cricket weeks. I forget who we were playing, but the captain of the other side was Major David Campbell, who rode the winner in a Grand National, and is now Gen. Sir David Campbell, K.C.B., Governor of Malta. In his team was a fast bowler, Morphy from Ashford, who was then being tried for Kent. I had knocked up some 50 to 60 runs when Morphy began his over with a straight ball, well pitched up on my leg stump. I drove it to the boundary, the little gate in the corner of the ground next the bridge over the Rother. Morphy persisted in his attack on my leg stump, and I drove the next three balls all for four, all to the same place. The fifth ball was also on my leg stump, but Morphy had skilfully shortened his length and got me; but four drives off four successive balls, and all fours, were a glorious ending to a cheerful innings. In the last important match I played at Rye I was very nearly knocked out. We were playing a Navy team which included a really fast bowler, and he was making havoc of our side. I put myself in 5th wicket, determined to stop the rot. The first ball I received was a fast ball on the leg stump, well pitched up, just the ball as I thought for my favourite square-leg hit, but the ball jumped up vertically from the pitch, hit me on the point of the jaw and laid me flat on my back. They all said, "You must go in and lie down", but I was so exasperated that I said, "Lie down be damned!" and resumed my innings. Next over I did put my adversary over the trees into the river with a square-leg hit, hit up 24, knocked off the bowler, and we finally won the match. As I walked back to the pavilion I recollect that I nearly collapsed, for the fact was that I had been playing on my nerves, or my temper, all the time.

Then there was country cricket as played on the village green, a game so essentially English in its broad humanity that I doubt if it could be played anywhere but in England. There is no formality about it, not always a strict adherence to the rigour of the game, but the village green provides opportunities for the study of human nature not

to be found on the classic ground of Lord's. Down in Sussex John Bull, a farmer, of Wittersham, used to umpire on occasion. In one match an appeal was made to him by the bowler. John Bull meditated for some seconds and then said, "Did you 'it that, Mus' Kenward?" Mus' Kenward, thinking the appeal was for a catch at the wicket, shouted back, "No, John, never touched it!" "Ho," says John, "then I give ye out, leg afore wicket."

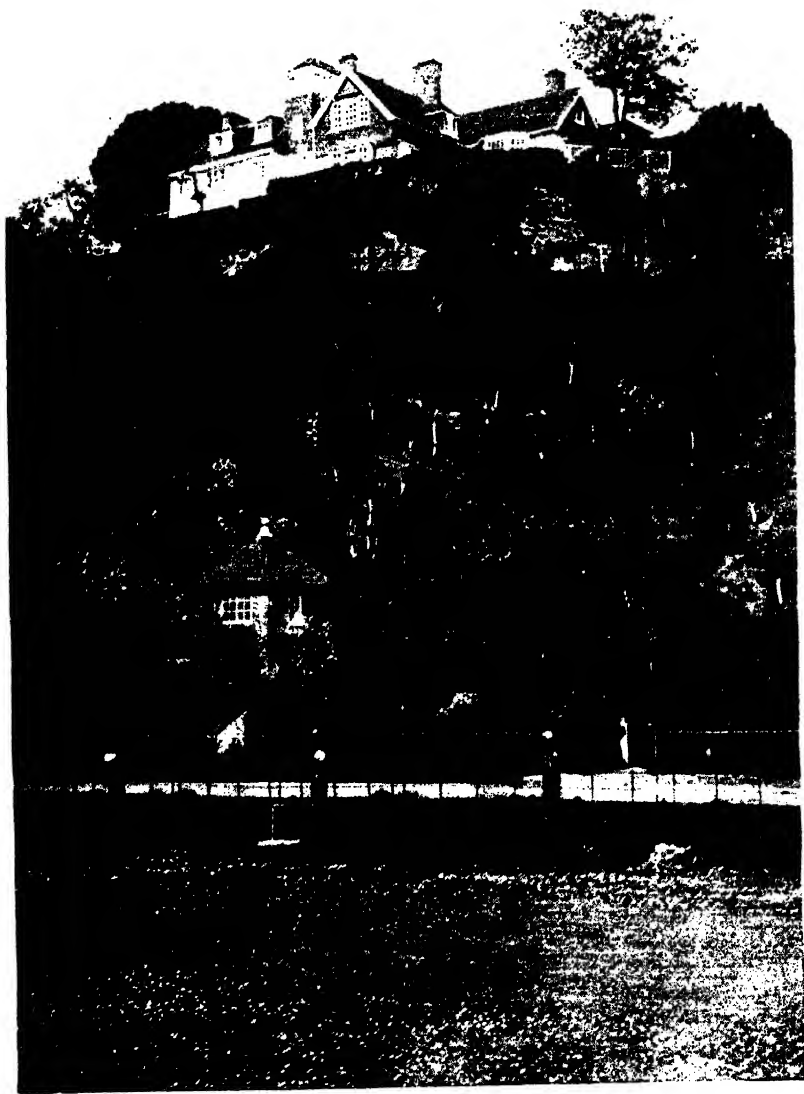
I used also to play for the Artists' Club from time to time with Peter Studd the painter, Arnesby Brown, Henry Ford (brother of Francis), Walter James (now Lord Northbourne), George Gascoigne, and other excellent artists who were more skilful with their brush and pencil than they were with the cricket bat. Our mainstay was Hillyard Swinstead, an industrious painter of sentimental pictures, and a very useful medium fast bowler—a cricketer who might at any time knock up a lot of runs, though he never played with a straight bat. In a match in the Home Park, Windsor, against "the Bowlers' Club"—so-called because it is their custom to play in a white pot hat—I made a century, and the *Sporting Life*, in its comment on my innings, remarked that a century on the Home Park ground took some doing. In actual fact I made it with greater ease than any large score I ever made, because this was in June and a fine crop of grass which was waiting to be cut made the boundaries very easy. All one had to do was to tap the ball into the long grass and wait till it was recovered. The Artists' Club once got as far as playing a very weak M.C.C. team at Lord's, through the good offices of Eaton, the well-known Secretary of the Royal Academy, an old cricketer, and a good sportsman. I made 56 and missed a catch. The Artists' Club very seldom won, but we used to have excellent fun in minor country cricket, and the man who started the Artists' Club was E. A. Abbey, the painter, a most genial little man, who used to put up a team of artists in his house for a cricket week at Fairford, where he then lived.<sup>1</sup> Abbey had no idea of cricket himself and went in

<sup>1</sup> The first Cricket Week at Fairford was in 1905.



last. We used to do all we could to make him hit at the ball, for he could hit a base-ball hard, but a cricket-ball used to paralyse him and he used to stand almost motionless at the wicket till he was bowled by the first straight ball. Abbey had a fine large studio at Fairford, and we used to spend our time very pleasantly in and out of his studio and in the cricket field, being most hospitably entertained by Mrs. Abbey. In later life Abbey bought Woodcote, in Hampshire, but was unable to get possession for some years. The tenant in possession was old Seymour Haden, the etcher, and it was a condition of sale that the tenant was not to be disturbed during his lifetime; but the old man lived an unconscionable time, and it was not till late in Abbey's life that he got possession, and I was let loose to reconstitute the house. Poor Abbey died before he was able to take possession of his property. Abbey had been my friend for many years, but I saw little of him at the end, partly owing to his failing health, partly owing to some misunderstanding on his part, but I look back to those pleasant cricket weeks at Fairford with gratitude and affection.





POINT HILL, RYE

## CHAPTER IX

Point Hill, Rye—Henry James—The Golf Links—Romney Marsh Harriers—Some Houses—Frank Green—East Sussex Foxhounds—Rye before the War.

My wife and I were now settled in our new house at Hampstead, and with three young children the question where we were to go for our summer holidays was becoming urgent. I decided that we must get a lodgement in the country, and as we were closely connected with Rye, that it must be there or thereabouts. One day when playing cricket on the Salts<sup>1</sup> I saw on the high ground to the north of the town, a little cottage perched like a swallow's nest, as my friend Prior used to say, on the very edge of the cliff that once used to form the old coast-line. It was obviously a wonderful site. Below to the right is the compact little town, suggesting one of Durer's woodcuts, with the road passing through the Land-gate and reappearing on the further side. Immediately in front is the Rother, a tidal river, now brimming over, like an estuary, now shrinking to a mere channel, with wide mud flats on either side, as the tides come up and down. Then there is the wide expanse of Romney Marsh, green fields and innumerable sheep, with Lydd Tower in the middle distance and beyond, Hythe, Folkestone and the white cliffs beyond Eastwear Bay, to the south the English Channel, and over all the infinite sky. There are few views like it anywhere, and if the place was to be had I meant to have it. I found the farmer who owned it very accommodating, and bought the cottage, a strip of ground just below the top of the cliff, and a 4-foot right-of-way past the farmer's hencoops,

<sup>1</sup> The Rye Cricket Ground.

for some £320. I had to carry out some alterations and additions, and having prepared the necessary drawings and specification, asked the local builder, who also kept a public-house, for an estimate. He gave me an absurdly low figure and I told him so, but all the old fellow said was "Me and Dunk (his foreman) have looked at it", and he appeared to be quite satisfied, but after six weeks he came to me with a long face and said he had spent all the money in his contract, and had only done about half the work. I told him he was an old donkey, and paid the extra cost, but the whole thing was characteristic of Rye in those cheerful unsophisticated days, when there was no Golf Club, no hordes of motorists, and the grass did in fact grow between the cobble-stones of Watchbell Street and Mermaid Street.

The tenant of the cottage, whom I had to move out and took on as my gardener, was a Sussex man, yet of a type unusual in that county. His name was James Hoad, a well-made, wiry man, extremely good-looking, who in the necessary dress would have made a very handsome French general. He was slow of speech, sardonic of outlook and, without exception, the most indefatigable glutton for hard work that I have ever met. He served me faithfully till, to use a phrase of his, he "took and died". What he really liked best was not so much gardening as building the various stone steps up and down the garden, and the masonry necessary to hold up the rocks, which he did extraordinarily well.

As time went on I bought up adjacent properties, so that the garden now covers a considerable amount of ground up the irregular sloping face of the cliff, or rather high bank, which forms the boundary next the Military Road. From time to time the whole garden below the rocks at the top would slip down in the winter. At least three times we had to reconstruct it, and here James Hoad was in his element. Had he had capital and the requisite training, he would have made a first-rate building contractor. On one occasion he was building some stone steps and,

as was his wont, was using cement in the proportion of 1 to 2. Dacre Vincent, the secretary of our Golf Club, who was looking on, suggested that this was rather powerful—to which Hoad, looking at him with contempt, replied, "I build for strength", and then relapsed into silence. He certainly did build for strength, for his work never failed, or if there was a landslip, came down in solid and unbreakable lumps.

When I made my lawn-tennis court, we found on the site some great limestone boulders, 3 or 4 feet long by some 2 feet wide and 15 inches thick. Hoad, with his traditional knowledge, split these up in the winter, and formed a paved path round three sides of the court. I am told that these boulders were deposited here in the Glacial period;—there is no stone like them in the neighbourhood, the rock of the cliff being a very friable sandstone, with thin vertical veins of ironstone, so hard and sharp that you could cut your finger on them.

From time to time I added to the house, and in 1912 my eldest son, being then 6 ft. 4 in. high and the main sitting-room only 6 ft. 3 in., I took the place seriously in hand, and reconstituted and added to the house, so that it is now a comfortable little house with nine bedrooms and three bathrooms, and the usual appurtenances of a small country house. Of course the whole atmosphere of the place has altered since those early days. When we first went there it was the haunt of all sorts of birds. In the dusk one could hear the strange cries of birds flying low overhead to the uplands. The nightingales used to make the nights almost a burden, green woodpeckers used to laugh among the apple trees, and at night barndoor owls would fly silently along the cliff like melancholy ghosts. Most of these have disappeared, but we still have our blackbirds and thrushes, robins and tits of all sorts, the incessant and indomitable starling, and great flocks of gulls wheeling about over the river and settling down in orderly formation on the banks of the grass fields below.

In the summer evenings the swallows used to be a constant delight. Unfortunately, during the recent occupation of Point Hill by tenants, all their nests were destroyed. The swallows left us, but I am glad to say they show signs of returning this summer. In stormy weather every wind of heaven assails us and the complaint that Catullus made of his villa might apply to Point Hill when half a gale is blowing:

Furi, villula nostra non ad Austri  
Flatus opposita est neque ad Favoni  
Nec saevi Boreae aut Apeliotae,  
Verum ad millia quindecim et ducentos—  
O ventum horribilem atque pestilentem!

but Catullus was apt to let himself go when things went wrong, and one can get pleasure even from the stormy winds.

It was at my cottage, Point Hill as it is called, that Henry James made the acquaintance of Rye. He took it in the months when we were not there, and was here year after year, tended by a devoted manservant, whom we used to call Bardolph, after that rascal in Shakespeare whose "nose would light a torch in hell". Bardolph was devoted to his master and was much exercised about his health, because Henry James in those days used to go out on his bicycle and return in a state of complete deliquescence, for he was no athlete and quite unused to any form of active exercise; indeed, later on, when he had bought Lamb House, it was his custom to take the train to Hastings in the afternoons in order to get exercise by walking up and down the nice paved promenade. During our annual cricket weeks at Rye he used to come on to the ground, but he always used to sit in the tent talking to the ladies with his back to the cricket, probably thinking the game too absurd to be worth the attention of serious people. On the other hand, he used to subscribe to the cricket club, and my final impression of Henry James was that, though his brain was subtle enough when he had a

pen in his hand, in the ordinary affairs of life he was just a kindly, generous innocent. He became so enamoured of Rye that he bought Lamb House and settled there. He used to come up and see us on Sunday afternoons, and his conversation was very interesting, in so far as one could follow his extremely involved sentences. I have an impression that I used to leave him on the terrace talking to somebody, while I had to go and arrange a set of lawn-tennis, and when I came back, found him still engaged on the sentence which he had begun before I left. He was a kind-hearted and sympathetic man, full of consideration for others, modest and even diffident considering his great and well-deserved reputation, and yet conscious of what was due to him. He once remarked to me on the occasion of an entertainment at Rye, at which in his opinion undue attention had been paid to a person of title, that it was "a deplorable evening in every way". He had of course a following of devoted admirers among residents and visitors to Rye, but much as I liked and admired Henry James, I came to Rye for sport and amusement, rather than for intellectual stimulus; indeed I once nearly jumped on to the old gentleman's head. He was sitting on the grass with his back against some railings by the side of the Camber Road, and I was riding along the field and never saw him till I jumped the fence and landed within a very few feet from where he was sitting.

It was in the nineties that some of us started the golf links at Rye, now one of the finest courses in the South of England. We were a little doubtful at first which side of the river they should be—where they are, or on the other side of the river on the open ground near Camber Castle. We wisely decided on the present site with its sandhills and its hazards, and I can recollect the early meeting in Southerden's cottage, that little derelict building near the 11th green, at which there were present the Rev. J. L. Bates, Rector of Iden; Ernest Skinner, the Doctor; John Vidler, a well-known resident at Rye; Arthur Brookfield, then member for Rye, and others whose names I have for-



gotten. I was actually the first person to play a round of golf on that ground. Herbert Ramus, the son of the Rector of Playden, was a keen golfer, and he and I set out some pieces of paper on sticks to symbolize holes. These were at once removed by the farmer; but the Committee afterwards came to terms with him and the links were duly formed. Our first secretary was H. S. Colt, a fine golfer, who afterwards transferred his energies to the designing of golf courses, and I suppose would now be given the ridiculous name of "golf architect"—a name pirated without the slightest foundation from an old and honourable calling. When the Rye Golf Club was fairly started we had a grand dinner, of which my chief recollection is that at our table we had a magnum of '63 port, that both Mr. Arthur Balfour and his brother Gerald (now Lord Balfour) were present, and that the latter in his speech devoted himself to explaining that he was not his brother Arthur. About this time George Prothero, the editor of the *Quarterly*, had a small house in the High Street at Rye, where he used to stay from time to time, a wise and kindly man, with a cheerful gift of irony, whom we often used to see at Point Hill. I used to play golf with him, and when I beat him he used to point out that this was not due to my superior skill, but to the brutal vigour with which I hit the ball when I did not miss it completely.

I played golf, first at Littlestone and then at Rye, with some assiduity up to about 1894. But at that time, fired by the enthusiasm of that fine sportsman, my brother-in-law, Richard Burra, I took to hunting with the Romney Marsh Harriers and the East Sussex Foxhounds. I began with a gallant horse that I hired from Hastings, a big, well-bred black who never turned his head from anything but water, and the reason for his refusing water was that he had a silver tube in his throat as he was a roarer. I hunted him for four seasons, and that horse taught me to ride. He was said to pull, and so he would if you sawed at his mouth, but when one got on to terms with him he was a delightful horse to ride, and after one or two casualties

I never had any trouble with him. My next horse was a five-year-old half-bred Irish hunter, who stood 16·3. Frank Green, the Master of the Romney Marsh Harriers, would not look at him, because he said it would take a ten-acre field to turn him; but Green was wrong, for we soon got used to each other, and in the ten years I hunted him, that horse only put me down three times, and this was not his fault. On account of his sagacity we called him Solomon; he was not fast, but he never made mistakes. I used to send him on to the meets of the Foxhounds, and drove out in a high and most uncomfortable dogcart with a certain George Forward, in whose stables Solomon was quartered, and with a very clever little cob, Sally, that my wife rode. George was a spare, wiry man, a first-rate man on a horse, and in his day a good man with his hands. He used to tell me stories of his somewhat irregular youth, and always made me think of one of George Borrow's gypsies, with queer strains in his character, of which one caught glimpses now and again. Sally, like Solomon, was a family pet. She only stood about 14·3, but I have seen my wife jump her over a five-barred gate when out with the Harriers on Romney Marsh. When Sally retired I bought a blue roan cob for my wife, Billy Flint, who was quite free from vice, but had a mania for pace; if you trotted him he broke into a canter and from a canter into a gallop, and was apparently indifferent to whether he went over his fences or through them. He was not up to my weight and was a dangerous horse, so I had to hand over Solomon, as the trusted friend of the family, first to my son and then to my wife, and bought another horse for myself, a perfect old English hunter to look at, and a real scoundrel at heart. I called him Thomas. When I mounted him in the morning, Thomas used to stand like a lamb, but twenty yards down the road he would throw off a series of kicks and do his best to unseat me. I stopped this by hitting him wherever I could, but Thomas in his sinful heart meant to get back on me, and one day in the Marsh he jumped the post instead of the rails, and we both

came down. I found myself sitting on the ground in considerable pain, then I got up and leant against a gate, and by this time realized that he had hit me or kicked me in the jaw, cracking most of my back teeth. The Whip, who was behind me, told me afterwards that he thought I was done for, as I ran round in a circle like a hare with a broken back, but I was not conscious of having moved till I got up and leant against the gate. I hunted Thomas after that, but I never trusted the horse; though a beautifully built horse, he had pig eyes and was a rogue at heart. I tried to replace him with a gallant young horse, a dark iron-grey, nearly 17 hands, for whom I had a great regard. I called him "Ajax" after the Telamonian. My brother-in-law, maintained that the horse saw ghosts, for he would suddenly wheel round in the road for no apparent reason, and then go on as if nothing had happened. He sometimes did this at his fences, and then would sail over them with feet to spare. He developed a growth on one of his forelegs, with which we could do nothing. I had to sell him, and for some years afterwards saw him pulling sadly in the shafts of the carrier's van. With the exception of that scoundrel Thomas, I look back on all the horses that I rode as dear old friends.

In those days the Master of the Romney Marsh Harriers was a Bedford timber merchant, Frank Green. He was a long, lean man, about 6 ft. 2 in. high, with light blue eyes, a fine rider, and the keenest huntsman I have ever come across. His favourite reading was *Handley Cross*, and he modelled himself on Jorrocks, whom he did not in the least resemble, except in his enthusiasm for hunting. He had good horses and rode very hard. I recollect that one day when he was not out he lent me one of his chestnuts. I rode him for about an hour, galloped him, jumped him and did all I could to get him easy, but it was no use, and I handed him back to Green and said I could do nothing with him. Green admitted that he had not had him out that season, but explained that he thought I was "a strong man on a horse" and that it would be all right.



REGINALD BLOMFIELD AND SOLOMON, 1902



I acknowledged the compliment, but told him I might just as well have been on the rack as ride this puller. In 1901 I gave a dinner in honour of Frank Green at the George Hotel, at Rye, attended by prominent members of the Hunt, and the champagne and port were of such excellent quality that the waiters finally joined in the choruses. It was a dinner entirely after the heart of the guest of the evening, one that might have been held in the days of Jorrocks' jaunts and jollities. Green concealed a great deal of shrewd humour under a brusque manner. He was a gallant fellow and a sportsman of a rare type. He died of consumption comparatively young, but kept his flag flying to the last.

I used also to hunt with the East Sussex Foxhounds. Most of this country is woodland and not very good going, but I used to enjoy myself, in a country so entirely different from the Marsh, and Charles Egerton, the Master, was indefatigable in showing us sport, and it appears that he approved of me. After his death Lady Mabel Egerton wrote to me: "You are associated with pleasant recollections of hunting days. My husband used to say you were one of the sort he liked best to have out—enjoying the sport when good, and making the best of it when bad, loyal to those in charge, and promoting general good feeling all round." I am rather proud of that testimonial. "The strength of Hercules and the temper of the devil" with which my aunt had credited me when seven years old must have mellowed since those early days. When the war broke out I gave away my saddles in answer to Lord Roberts' appeal, and I have never hunted or ridden since.

We really had a glorious time at Rye in those days before the war. Cricket and lawn-tennis in the summer, golf, cub-hunting in the autumn, hunting and shooting in the winter, hockey on the ice at Christmas on the Wittersham levels; there was always something to do in the short holidays that I could snatch from my professional work, and these were the days when the country was not yet ruined by motor-cars and charabancs, when the Farmers could still

hold up their heads and—the truth must come out—when we were all of us young.

. . . *Transiet aetas  
quam cito: non segnis stat, remeatque dies.  
Quam cito purpureos deperdit terra colores,  
Quam cito formosas populus alta comas.*

## CHAPTER X

The South African War and Mounted Infantry of the Inns of Court—  
Spion Kop—The *Architectural Review*—Essays—Architectural Education  
and the R.I.B.A.

IN my younger days I had never joined the Volunteers. At Oxford in my day we mixed them up with Ruskin's "Hinksey diggers". But when we were fighting the Boers in 1900 I thought it was time to qualify myself for service should the necessity arise, and I joined the Inns of Court Mounted Infantry. I was rapidly promoted to Corporal, but there I stuck, for I could never recollect the right words of command. In August 1900 we went for a fortnight's training on Salisbury Plain. Our tent was pitched on what appeared to be the remains of a cinder heap; it was rather down-hill, and on our first night in camp one of the Company snored intolerably. We used to lie on the ground with our feet towards the tent-pole, and on leaning over to stop the snoring I hit the wrong man, my old friend Cleverly, the artist, who woke with a loud shriek, "I won't be killed. I won't be killed!" The Guard looked in, but peace was restored, and for the rest of the training, living as one did all day in the open and taking any amount of exercise, one fell asleep at once. I never felt so fit in my life as I did after that fortnight on Salisbury Plain. At the end of it we had a race which I won on an old Arab horse of rather uncertain temper which its owner would not ride. However the old horse went like the wind, and as the fast cob which Corlette, the architect, was riding bolted with him the wrong side of the post, I was proclaimed the winner. On another occasion I was sent out scouting with another man, who held my horse while I advanced in the approved



manner, but after I had gone some fifty yards, "the foot-sloggers", as we called the unmounted men, fired at me from the wood in which they had cunningly concealed themselves. I turned round to get to my horse, and saw my No. 2 galloping away as hard as he could with my horse. By this time all pretence of soldiery was thrown overboard. I stumped back in the open, filling the air with appeals to heaven, and when I got back reminded my No. 2 that the Victoria Cross was awarded for saving men, not horses.

1900 was the year of Spion Kop; my brother Charles commanded the 2nd Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers, a hard-bitten, fighting regiment, and was shot through the body early in the action. He told his second-in-command to carry on and pick him up later. But it seems that he became delirious and wandered away from where they had left him, and when, through a deplorable blunder of higher authority, the British forces were withdrawn from the hill, his men could not find him. We had actually won the hill when this order was given, and it was not till some time later that the Boers, seeing the Hill unoccupied, took possession of it. They found my brother and took him off to Pretoria, where they treated him well. I was at Daws Hill, High Wycombe, where I had been called in by Lord Carrington to advise about the design of a garden, when a telegram reached him reporting the battle of Spion Kop and the loss, killed or missing, of one of the officers in command. Whether it was due to anxiety on my part, or to some more recondite cause, I was convinced then and there that my brother was the officer, as in fact he was.

It was in the autumn of 1900 that I first met Henry Newbolt shooting with Paul Waterhouse at Yattendon. He was on the next stand to me outside the cover, and I noted that he paced up and down, no doubt composing some of his admirable poetry. He has since told me that it was nothing of the sort, but that, having lent me some cartridges, he was afraid he would not have enough left for himself when the birds came over. My father died in 1900, and what with the necessary business of an executor and

my work as an architect at Brocklesby, Mellerstain, Godinton, Caythorpe and elsewhere, and the completion and issue of my *Short History of Renaissance Architecture in England*<sup>1</sup> 1900 was a busy year.

In the year following I found myself again engaged on a quasi-public undertaking. G. E. Mallows, the architect and draughtsman, had suggested a serious journal of Architecture, to be issued monthly. His idea was that a committee of practising architects should be formed to meet once a month and discuss contemporary buildings, a sort of round table at which members were to suggest buildings for the consideration of the Committee, with a view to their illustration in the *Review*, and this idea was actually realized in the *Architectural Review*. The members of the Committee were:

John Belcher	E. J. May
Reginald Blomfield	Ernest Newton
Frank Baggallay	E. S. Prior
Gerald Horsley	Halsey Ricardo
W. Millard	Leonard Stokes
Mervyn Macartney	Norman Shaw

D. S. MacColl joined us to put our deliberations into shape and generally edit the *Review*. Norman Shaw, of course, as a senior man, did not attend the meetings, and wrote to me a year later to say that he definitely retired from the Committee, and did not know how he had ever got there. Mr. Percy Hastings, the Managing Director of Technical Journals, Ltd., who was in charge of the *Review*, used to give us excellent luncheons at the Savoy, where we met once a month. After some little time the Committee came to the conclusion that it was hardly fair to put the Proprietors to all this expense, so by a self-denying resolution it dissolved itself, and delegated its powers to a small committee consisting of Belcher, Macartney and myself, with MacColl as Editor. I was anxious to develop the literary side of the *Review* on the lines of the *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, and advocated this at a meeting with Hastings, Belcher

<sup>1</sup> Published by Bell and Sons.

and Macartney. I pointed out that there was nobody better qualified to do this than MacColl, and urged Mr. Hastings to make it worth his while by increasing his salary. About six weeks afterwards, however, Mr. Hastings announced to the Committee that Macartney had been appointed Editor instead of MacColl. Belcher and I had never been consulted and this announcement was the first intimation we had of the change. We were very indignant. We at once severed our connection with the *Review*, and insisted on a formal notice of this being inserted in the next number. This was duly inserted in the March number, 1905, and after that I took no further interest in the publication. I wrote to MacColl: "I think the thing to do is to concentrate on the *Burlington*, and help in making that the English *Gazette des Beaux Arts*". The original idea was a good one, and had it been loyally carried out might have led to remarkable results, but as I wrote to Ernest Newton at the time: "I thoroughly disapprove of the whole affair. . . . Commercialism has won for the time, but I doubt its staying power."

I had contributed various essays to the *Architectural Review* on the following subjects: "Palladio"—"The Architect of Newgate"—"A Hundred Years of the French Renaissance"—"Philibert de L'Orme" and "The Italians at Fontainebleau". These, together with a critical study of Rivoira's Lombard architecture, which appeared in the *Quarterly*, were published by Macmillans in 1905, under the title of *Studies in Architecture*. The essays on Palladio and on Newgate were useful studies, and the frontispiece of the book was a reproduction of a beautiful drawing by Muirhead Bone, entitled "The Last of Newgate". I have that drawing myself, and it is one of the best that that wonderful draughtsman has ever made. Bone was then a young man, a recent arrival in London, and comparatively unknown at the time, and I was fortunate in inducing him to make this drawing for the *Architectural Review*.

About this time (1904) thoughtful architects were very

much dissatisfied with the methods of architectural training. There were the examinations for membership of the Institute on the one hand, and on the other there were Schools working in comparative isolation and on no co-ordinated scheme. The old system of articulated pupils was failing, and it was felt that all men of goodwill whether in the Institute or out of it should unite for the purpose of a reform of architectural training. The first move was made by those of us who were not members of the Institute, but we soon got into touch with Aston Webb, who did valuable work at that time in bringing us together, and finally in persuading the Secessionists that the time had come to bury the hatchet and work together in the cause of education.

Jackson was still rather suspicious of the movement as carrying registration in its train, but we had to take the risk of this, and by July 1904 we had already drawn up a programme of training and proposals for the establishment of a Board of Architectural Education. I pointed out to Jackson that the Institute was the only body that could constitute such a Board, and on Lethaby's and my suggestion the Institute was asked to establish the Board. The Board was duly constituted in 1904, though strangely enough it was independent of the Institute, and acted on its own in negotiating with various educational bodies for the acceptance of our scheme. In May 1904 I wrote to Jackson urging him to join the Board and pointing out that we had no administrative functions and that our work was limited to

Co-operating with the Institute in drawing up a scheme and in negotiating with the various Bodies. When that is done, whether successfully or not, our work terminates, our independence is reserved, and the scheme which we should draw up we should offer to the Institute to accept or not among other Bodies . . . the responsibility resting with the Bodies who would have to carry out the scheme, should it be accepted.

I pointed out to Jackson that no scheme of architectural training had any chance unless it was backed by the

Institute, and that it was a question of now or never. The situation was a curious one. The Institute already had a Committee of Architectural Education, and here were we, an outside Board, drawing up a scheme of our own, which was to be offered to the various Institutions dealing with the training of architectural students throughout the country. Thus, on August 12, 1904, at the request of the Secretary of the Institute, I wrote a long letter to Dr. Chase, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, explaining the purposes and constitution of the Board, and forwarding its report. I pointed out that its object was to train the student's mind, and not merely cram it with facts, and that it was for this reason that the Board was inviting the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge as well as the Modern Universities to appoint representatives as advisory members. The Provincial Societies of Architects were also invited to give their views on the scheme, and everything was done to cover the ground as completely as possible.

In April 1905 I was informed that the Senate of London University approved of our scheme. It was well received generally, and in June 1905 I was able to inform Reilly of Liverpool that the following visitors had been appointed: Webb and Champneys to the Architectural Association, Belcher and Prior to King's College, Stokes and I to University College. We were now working in close co-operation with Aston Webb, John Slater and other members of the Institute, and I wrote to Jackson on July 5, 1905, that

After much consideration I have come to the conclusion that it is now my duty to rejoin the Institute. During the last two years a struggle has been going on between the Registrationists, the obscure men of the calling generally, and the other and more responsible men of the Institute (Webb, Belcher, Emerson, George and others) who are opposed to Registration as both impracticable and demoralizing. Last year the Registrationists succeeded in routing their opponents, collared the Council and have been rushing out a Registration Bill. This year by a strenuous effort the older men have beaten

the Registration party and are again in power. Their position, however, seems to be precarious, and it is under these circumstances that I consider it a duty to the profession to go in and support them.

I called Jackson's attention to the

. . . loyal support given by Webb and his party to our education scheme, which had resulted in its establishment after two years' negotiation. Their attitude has won my confidence and I think the time has come for closing up the ranks of our calling as among men *bonae voluntatis*.

Jackson had never belonged to the Institute. He disliked it nearly as much as Shaw did, and it was not to be expected that he and men of his generation, such as Champneys, would go back on the tradition of a lifetime, but we younger men returned to the fold—Lethaby, Macartney, Newton, Horsley and I, and I think rightly. There was bound to be a Central body representing the architects of the country. The Institute was in possession, with its fine tradition of earlier years, its excellent Library and its efficient organization, and there was no other body in the slightest degree qualified to compete with it. And so at length there was peace between us, the powerful forces of the Institute, led by Webb, who acted the peace-maker with admirable tact and patience, and the younger men of movement, led by myself to the best of my ability.

On November 1, 1905, a meeting was held in Ricardo's house at which I was in the chair, and the following resolution was agreed to:

We recognize the great importance of the R.I.B.A. to the architectural profession and more particularly feel that any scheme of architectural education can only be carried through and administered by means of the Institute. We attach much importance to architectural education. The scheme of Education propounded by the Board of Architectural Education has our entire support and we desire to assist the Institute in carrying it out.

We feel that in rejoining the Institute we should clearly define our position:

(a) We understand that the R.I.B.A. will zealously support the scheme of Architectural education;

(b) We are strongly opposed to any legislative restrictions in the practice of Architecture.

The resolution was signed by—

W. Cave	G. Newton
G. Horsley	H. Ricardo
E. Lutyens	Thackeray Turner
W. R. Lethaby	E. P. Warren <sup>1</sup>
M. Macartney	Reginald Blomfield
W. C. Marshall	(in the chair)

So ended the long controversy begun fifteen years ago. I again became a Fellow of the Institute. The Board of Architectural Education was taken over by the Institute and I became its chairman. In the years following I again became a member of Council and remained on it for the next twenty years, as Fellow, Vice-President, President and Past President of the R.I.B.A. Our leaders were Shaw and Jackson in the early stages. After the issue of *Architecture, a Profession or an Art*, Shaw withdrew, though there was always his shrewd wisdom in the background to refer to. Jackson from the first, and almost up to the end, took a very active and leading part in our discussions, and his clear mind, his mastery of English, and high standard of attainment as an artist and a scholar were invaluable to us. Of the younger men, W. R. Lethaby was the most forceful personality. His ideas might seem impracticable, even fantastic to ordinary men of affairs, but his mind ranged free and far, his own standard of life was immeasurably high, he was sincere in his convictions and we all believed in him.

Now that the heat and dust of the conflict has disappeared in a distant past, I think that though there may have been mistakes on both sides, the fighting out of the issue between us was of very great service to architecture.

<sup>1</sup> Prior and E. J. May could not attend this meeting, but agreed to the resolution.

The fact that the issue was squarely met rescued that art for at least one generation from being buried deep in the rut of commercialism, and it undoubtedly resulted in the development of a system of architectural training which has in the main justified itself, if in these latter days it has wandered somewhat off the way, and in its enthusiasm for the future has forgotten that there has ever been a past.



## CHAPTER XI

Charles Furse—The R.W.S.—Alma-Tadema—Professor of Architecture at the Royal Academy—Jackson's Proposals, and the Arts and Crafts—Hon. Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford—The Surveyorship of St. Paul's Cathedral—"Paul's Cross".

CHARLES FURSE, the painter, was an old friend of mine, and in 1902 I designed for him a house "Yockley", which was built on the high ground above Camberley. His health was already failing, but Furse was a man of indomitable courage and vivacity. I recollect one evening at Yockley, when Ethel Smythe came over to dinner. She and Charlie Furse tossed the ball backwards and forwards all the evening, and Katherine Furse remarked to me how nice it must be to be able to talk like that, but I suggested that there was also merit in intervals of brilliant silence, and reminded her that if the talk was good one could listen to it, and if it was dull one could go to sleep. Furse was not then a Member of the Academy and remarked to me, "What a lark it would be if we were both elected together". In actual fact he was elected an Associate in January 1904. I was elected just a year later. Had he lived, I think in due course Furse might have succeeded Poynter as President of the Royal Academy. He was just the man for the post; a gentleman, a fine artist, a man of ready address and good presence, with any amount of confidence in himself. He was painting exceedingly well, far better than he had in his younger days, but, alas, he died of consumption in October 1904, and in his last illness just before he died, he said, "Well, we have put up a good fight". He was a serious loss to the Art of this country, and his strong personality might have gone far to arrest the present debacle.

I was elected A.R.A. in January 1905, and within a few days of my election I received a furious letter from Waterlow, President of the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours, signed by several prominent members of the Society, attacking me for having injured the interests of that body by the new building of the United University Club, which was being built from my designs next door to their gallery. I had not the least idea what they were talking about, and was quite unconscious that the Society had any interest in the matter. I found on enquiry that the Society, who were Crown tenants of the building next the Club, had hoped to control the design of the whole block, and to employ an architect of their own; as, however, they were not rebuilding, and the Club was, I failed to see where they came in. On receipt of the protest I went at once to see Waterlow, who was President of the Society, but found him very angry, and resolute not to listen to anything I had to say, so I went straight on to Alma-Tadema, one of the signatories of the protest, and explained the position to him. Tadema, who was a genial person, listened patiently, and when I had finished said, "I told them they ought not to send the letter". After this, he showed his sympathy by telling me one of the more improper of his many stories.

Waterlow had written to Norman Shaw, who replied that he was confident that I should do nothing that was not right and honourable. Waterlow also endeavoured to arrange a meeting at Belcher's office, to which Webb and Emerson were invited, with a view to considering my design for the front of the United University Club. Waterlow's architect asked me to attend this meeting, which, of course, I declined to do, and I wrote to Belcher in November 1905 to point out that it was "hardly in order for one architect to give an opinion on another man's work, especially when he had no knowledge of the conditions under which it was designed". The conditions had been laid down for me by the Crown (the Woods and Forests), and no intimation had been given me that the Royal Society of Painters in Water-

Colours was affected in any way, until this bomb was hurled at me by its infuriated President. In my letter to Belcher I found it necessary to say: "In any case I may say at once that I am unable to recognize the competence of your meeting to give any opinion on the question, and I shall resent your interference in this matter should you decide to interfere". After this I heard no more about it, and later on friendly relations were resumed with Waterlow, who, I think, realized that I was wholly innocent in the matter, and that if he had wished to kick anyone he should have kicked the Woods and Forests.

In 1906 I was appointed Professor of Architecture to the Royal Academy. My predecessor, George Aitchison, had been Professor of Architecture from 1887 to 1905, when he resigned. He died in 1910, and not long before he died he showed me the work that he had done in Lord Leconfield's house, and although he never had a wide reputation, I thought it good of its kind. Aitchison was a genial old gentleman with an inexhaustible fund of cheerful stories. Almost the last time I saw him, he was sorting out his papers for one of those lectures on Roman Architecture that he had been giving for years in the Academy lecture theatre. Attendance at these lectures was compulsory on all students in the Academy Schools, painters and sculptors as well as architects, and I was a little doubtful as to my reception by the students. However, Croft, the Keeper, was a kindly chairman. The students gave me the benefit of the doubt and proved to be an excellent audience. My idea was not to weary them with technicalities or too much history, but to endeavour to direct their attention to Architecture and the Arts in relation to life, as an expression of man's intelligence and imagination and as a means of realizing himself. I took as my subjects "The Study of Architecture", "Design and Temperament", "Architecture and the Craftsman" and "The Limitations of the Arts". There was then, and there is still, a great deal of confusion as to what is and is not within the province of the various arts, and I recalled the attention of the students to the

principle first laid down by Aristotle in the *Poetics* and admirably re-stated by Lessing in the *Laocoon*, that each art has its own particular purpose and should confine itself to that. If only our painters and sculptors and architects would bear this in mind, we should have been spared the abstractions of M. Picasso, the figures on St. James's Park Station and the New Adelphi Theatre in the Strand, and I have often maintained that no art critic should be allowed to write until he had satisfied competent examiners that he had mastered the *Poetics* and the *Laocoon*.

I followed up these discourses with lectures on "The Grand Manner" as shown in Egypt and Greece, "Hellenistic Art", "Rome and France", hoping against hope to divert students from the fashion for the picturesque and abundance of ornament prevalent at the time to a loftier conception of architecture as the art of *ordonnance*. I seem to have been so successful in my protest against the period man and the revivalist that the New Architects have turned their backs on the whole of the past and prefer the results of their inner consciousness to the legacy of countless generations. However, I appear to have done some good in America if not in England. These lectures were published by Edward Arnold in 1908 under the title of *The Mistress Art*, and I have found a letter from Mr. Brooks, who wrote to me from Indiana University in 1919: "I can say with entire truth that I have read and re-read your *Mistress Art* for ten years, and I find it always more inspiring and delightful, and to my students always more and more useful".

In 1908 and 1909 I lectured on "Architectural Drawing and the Early French Renaissance",<sup>1</sup> and resigned after four years of Professorship. The professorships of painting, sculpture and architecture have lapsed since that date. The fact is that artists are usually inarticulate in any art except their own. Sir Joshua Reynolds, of course, with his *Discourses* is a famous exception. Fromentin was

<sup>1</sup> Published later by Cassell and Co. as *Architectural Drawing and Draughtsmen*.

both a painter and a critic, Charles Holmes and D. S. MacColl are artists who have written well and clearly on their Art, and George Clausen once gave some excellent lectures, afterwards published under the title of *Aims and Ideals in Art*. Of course, architects have always written from time to time since the days of Vitruvius. Alberti, Serlio, Palladio, Vignola and De l'Orme were prolific writers, Viollet-le-Duc was most ingenious in building up large theories on somewhat scanty evidence, and M. Choisy wrote a very able and comprehensive history of Architecture, in which his knowledge as an engineer has enabled him to explain, or rather suggest explanation of, some of the most astonishing feats of construction in the buildings of antiquity. Among English architects Gilbert Scott, George Edmund Street and Graham Jackson have written very well on certain phases of architecture, but as a general rule artists find it difficult to express themselves, and, when they lecture, usually take refuge either in technical expositions or in platitudes. This rouses no enthusiasm in students, who are apt to go to sleep, or if the worst comes to the worst express their impatience in coughs and catcalls, as they did in the later lectures of Viollet-le-Duc in the École des Beaux Arts.

I was now Professor of Architecture at the Academy, and as a Visitor to the schools I came to the conclusion that the architectural school at any rate wanted reorganization. Jackson wanted to drop the lectures on Architecture, and institute lectures and demonstrations given by outsiders on the arts and crafts. I wrote to him on March 7, 1906:

The more I think over this proposal, the less I like it. Such lectures can only give students a superficial idea of the crafts dealt with; they will distract the students' attention instead of concentrating it on Architecture, which is what is wanted now; and they will encourage a certain amateurishness which is at this moment the one weak point in English art all round the table. I have come to the conclusion that the Arts and Crafts Movement has done more harm than good to *Architecture*.

I pointed out that the danger was "inexact knowledge and incompetent technique", and suggested that the proposed lectures would "not help, but rather retard the progress of Architecture". I wrote to the same effect to Aston Webb:

Our business is to train students in Architecture, not to give them a smattering in half-a-dozen crafts which will only distract their attention, and encourage the growing tendency to a certain flabby amateurishness which is on the increase all round. . . . My personal opinion is that the idea is old-fashioned and not what is now wanted.

Jackson was a sincere artist and a scholar, but his mind was still living in the nineties, when Architecture was supposed to consist of building plus ornament, the disastrous legacy of Ruskin, who did more to retard the development of Architecture and its true understanding than any man of genius who has ever written on the arts. That remarkable man, W. R. Lethaby, never woke up from the trance into which Ruskin's eloquence had thrown him, and in his conception of Architecture, Jackson, able man as he was, had not advanced beyond the ideas of the Art Workers Guild and the Arts and Crafts Society. Those Societies had done excellent work, up to a point, in breaking down conventions, but they had missed the point when it came to dealing with Architecture, the Art *par excellence* of abstract form, which can make its impact on the emotions by sheer rhythmical form and composition of forms, without one particle of sculpture or painting in the whole of the building. The apotheosis of the Arts and Crafts Movement is to be seen in the Town Hall of Stockholm, in which there are a dozen different scales and an indefinite quantity of different motives.

Jackson's proposals were not carried further, and the architectural school at the Academy was run by the Visitors with an excellent Master, Mr. De Grouchy. I tried hard to induce students from the schools of Painting and Sculpture to endeavour to acquaint themselves with the rudiments of Architecture in the architectural school. A few did, among whom I recollect Miss Clausen, but for some

reason Colton, who was then Professor of Sculpture, did not encourage his students to attend the course, although they were just the people who needed it most. Since the war a course of Architecture for students of Painting and Sculpture has been instituted, and under the admirable teaching of Mr. Bradshaw the students are doing very useful work. A course in Architecture ought to be made compulsory for all students. It is excellent training for their minds, inasmuch as, instead of going free and large, they have to design to definite conditions, they learn something about proportion as a system of related design and they may acquire a sense of scale, though, unless they have an inborn instinct for scale and values, no amount of training will give it them. For sculptors such a training would be invaluable, because only in this way can they get some insight into the meaning and intention of the buildings on which they may be employed.

In 1906 I was elected an Honorary Fellow of my old College, Exeter College, Oxford. I was immensely pleased and wrote to my old Tutor, W. W. Jackson, now the Rector: "No distinction could be more gratifying to me, not only because it is entirely unexpected, but also because I value very highly my connection with Oxford and more particularly with Exeter College". I have a great affection for Exeter, both because three generations of my family have been members of the College, and also because, after the rather dreary years I spent at Haileybury, when I entered as a scholar at Exeter I entered on four years of almost unalloyed happiness, and I still look back on those four years with gratitude and affection.

So far I had every reason to be pleased with 1905-6, as I had been elected A.R.A., Professor of Architecture at the Royal Academy and Hon. Fellow of Exeter College; but I was a good deal disappointed about the surveyorship of St. Paul's Cathedral. Somers Clarke, the surveyor, was resigning the surveyorship, and both he and Richmond, who had completed their work on the Cathedral not very long before, seemed to think I was the right man for the post;

so did Canon Scott-Holland and some, at any rate, of the Chapter. I had already designed for the Cathedral the big processional Cross, with which in 1910 the Dean and Chapter<sup>1</sup> came to the rescue of the Archbishop of Canterbury, when he was in despair of being able to find a suitable cross for the lying-in-state of King Edward in Westminster Hall. I had devoted a great deal of study and research to the work of Sir Christopher Wren, and cherished the hope of being entrusted with the care of his masterpiece. Moreover I had, to some extent, a family connection with St. Paul's. My grandfather had been Bishop of London from 1828 to 1856, and his tomb is in the south aisle of the Choir, with a recumbent figure modelled by old George Richmond the painter. Richmond was a great friend of my grandfather's and owed him a good deal of his success, for my grandfather, who knew everybody in the middle of the last century, introduced him to his friends, and Richmond executed those charming portraits, often in water-colour, which won for him a well-deserved reputation. However, it was not to be. One morning I saw the announcement in *The Times* that my old friend Mr. Mervyn Macartney had been appointed surveyor to St. Paul's Cathedral. The announcement was a complete surprise to me, as I did not even know he was standing for it; but he had powerful backing of another sort, and there he remained until he resigned after twenty-five years' service.

Brydon, the architect of the new Government offices facing to George Street, Parliament Street and St. James's Park, died in 1905. The building was not finished when he died. Leonard Stokes, who was, I think, Brydon's

<sup>1</sup> On May 27, 1910, Canon Scott-Holland wrote to me: "Did you recognize that it was your beautiful cross that saved the day for the King's lying-in-state at Westminster Hall? The Duke of Norfolk threw doubts on the Archbishop's power to produce an adequate cross for the occasion. The Archbishop, very indignant, came to us and was delighted to find a cross of that character and of English work. It looked wonderfully well, I gather, and dominated the bier. It has come back all safe, with great thanks from the King's people, but especially with the gratitude of the Archbishop."



executor, hoped to have carried on Brydon's work, but no architect was appointed to succeed him, and the Office of Works were authorized to complete the building. They at once set about cutting down the design, and proposed to omit Brydon's towers both on the George Street and Charles Street fronts, on the ground that the towers would interfere with the lighting of the windows on the opposite sides of the roads, and also that their omission would improve the design. I find that, in April 1906, I drafted a letter of protest, signed by myself and others and addressed to Harcourt, who was then First Commissioner of Works. We pointed out that in fact the towers in question could not affect the lighting of buildings opposite, owing to the width of the streets, and in regard to the wholly arbitrary assumption that it would improve the design we gave it as our opinion that the omission of the centre towers would inflict a vital injury on the late Mr. Brydon's designs.

We would also remind you that when the Office of Works was entrusted with the carrying out of Mr. Brydon's design on the death of that architect, the public was assured that the designs left by Mr. Brydon would be faithfully observed . . . unless there are urgent public reasons for such alterations. It is in our opinion an act of injustice to an architect of deserved reputation, to materially alter the designs of the great work of his life, when that architect is no longer here to maintain his designs in their integrity.

This stout and outspoken protest, split infinitive and all, appears to have been effectual, for the towers were built. The Office of Works has never been popular with architects. The architects might well use the bitter words of Job: "No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you. But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these?" The claims of the Office of Works to superior knowledge, and its encroachments on the province of outside architects, have always been a sore subject with us. The officials point to their successful buildings with pride, omitting to say that they have the resources of the Govern-

ment and the pocket of the taxpayer behind them, and the outside architects say of the Office of Works that its buildings may or may not answer their purpose, but that they never show the least trace of originality in design. However, to do them justice they might be very much worse, as, for example, the new Admiralty buildings, which we owe to the mistake of the Assessor, who mistook the author of the design for a very famous architect. The Office of Works has immense opportunities of patronage, and has on occasion used them, but in my opinion the design of all new public buildings should be thrown open to competition, and the energies of the Office of Works should be limited to the conservation of State and historical buildings (a work, by the way, which it does extremely well).

In this year, 1906, I designed Paul's Cross, in St. Paul's Churchyard. A sum of £5000 had been left by Mr. H. C. Richards, K.C., to rebuild Paul's Cross, the open-air preaching pulpit which once stood in St. Paul's Churchyard, and which was destroyed in 1643 by order of the Long Parliament. The old Cross appears to have been a somewhat rudimentary affair, rather resembling a kiosk or sentry-box built of stone, with steps leading up from the back and a low parapet wall in front. This had replaced an earlier pulpit built in 1449. The first idea and the intention of Richards had been to produce an exact replica of the old Cross, oblivious of the fact that Wren had rebuilt the Cathedral in his own manner, and I very soon came to the conclusion that an exact replica was out of the question. I wrote to Scott-Holland in June 1906:

The worst of it is that the site of the old pulpit is right under the shadow of the walls. This is what has impressed me, and I could think of no other form that would stand up against and yet not challenge the mass of the Cathedral. (You may recollect Bernini's obelisk on an elephant at the back of the Pantheon at Rome, and how it holds its own amid tall buildings.)

I do not recollect what this tentative design was, possibly some form of obelisk. After various experiments, I finally

arrived at the design which was carried out, and which now stands in St. Paul's Churchyard north-west of the Cathedral on the diagonal axis of the re-entering angle, and I invited that excellent sculptor, Bertram Mackennal, to carry out the figures. I was called in in 1906, but there were considerable delays, and an obscure intrigue was going on in the background. Some wholly misleading information had appeared in a daily paper in 1907, given, I learnt, by an official of St. Paul's. I was able, however, to write to Lang,<sup>1</sup> whom I had known in connection with Lady Margaret Hall and Portsca, that the matter was cleared up, but there were still difficulties to be met. When the model was shown in the Royal Academy in 1908 it was objected that it did not reproduce the old Paul's Cross. One paper said:

These comments are not directed against the great merits of Mr. Blomfield's design, which are obvious and fully acknowledged, but are based on the assertion that it does not adhere strictly to the intention of the late Mr. Richards.

The answer was that, having regard to Wren's splendid design of the Cathedral, the old Jacobean pulpit was out of the question, and the Dean and Chapter very early accepted my view as to this and approved my design. The site, however, was still in question, because the City had to be consulted and give its approval to the site. Scott-Holland wrote to me, with subtle irony, that "our own Majestic Turtle"<sup>2</sup> was dealing with the matter. The Archdeacon was popular with the City, and his efforts seem to have been successful, for the Court of Common Council finally approved the site in February 1909, and the Cross was completed, and was inaugurated by the Bishop of London in 1910. The Chapter of St. Paul's passed a minute thanking me "for the admirable skill with which you have carried out the fine design of St. Paul's Cross", and

<sup>1</sup> Then Suffragan Bishop of Stepney, now Archbishop of Canterbury.

<sup>2</sup> Archdeacon Sinclair, a man of portly and majestic presence, whose profile always reminded me of William Blake's drawings of William Wallace and "the man who built the pyramids".

Mackennal for "the beautiful figure with which he has crowned it". My old friend Scott-Holland wrote to me:

I must write at once to express my intense delight and admiration. It is the most beautiful and appropriate monument in London. It holds its own with such detachment and distinction, and even when looked at with the Cathedral behind it, it is not in the least overwhelmed but carries itself with meaning and honour. The figure at the top has a touch of importance about it, and the boys round the base are delicious. I think the whole monument explains itself and justifies itself as the record of a memorable story and it looks entirely at home in its position. Thank you heartily for this triumph.

That letter was very welcome. I had enjoyed doing the work and had a first-rate colleague; but the problem was a very difficult one and the responsibility great. One might so easily have gone to pieces over it.

## CHAPTER XII

The Cambridge Syndicate, 1907—Waldstein and Ridgway—An Advanced School of Design and the Royal Academy—Poynter and Hemy—The Standing Committee of Advice and the Board of Education.

THE Board of Architectural Education established by the R.I.B.A. was now at work. I had succeeded Aston Webb as Chairman of the Board, and already had my eye on the possibilities of the schools of the Royal Academy as a Final School of Art. Meanwhile the University of Cambridge had seen its chance for another technical school, and two men, Ridgway, the Disney Professor of Archaeology, and Waldstein,<sup>1</sup> the Slade Professor, were agitating for a School of Architecture with a Diploma to follow it. In December 1907 a Syndicate, appointed by the University to consider the desirability of instituting a Diploma in Architecture, reported that the education of architects in England was in an unsatisfactory condition, that the principle of apprenticeship was on the wane and that the remedy was “a sound general education on liberal lines, supplemented by special instruction in the principles of construction in history and in art”. The hand of the Professors is clearly evident in this statement, and unkind people said that the real object of the Professors was to fill their empty lecture-rooms. In collaboration with Graham Jackson and Basil Champneys I drafted a long letter to *The Times* in answer to this report, which was signed by Jackson, Champneys and myself, and in this letter we pointed out that architectural training had already been entirely reorganized by the R.I.B.A., and that in our opinion (“and we offer it as

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Sir Charles Walston.

Oxford and Cambridge men and architects in practice”) the proposed school at Cambridge could not do what was expected of it for the following reasons:

- (1) That the real difficulty with pupils was not their lack of technical knowledge, but the fact that, owing to their imperfect general education, they did not know how to learn.
- (2) That the method of training now in use among architects was directly practical, and that this could only be efficient if supplemented by practical demonstrations in builders’ yards and workshops and on buildings in process of erection. There did not appear to be any possibility of such facilities being found at Cambridge either as regards the teachers or the teaching, and that “for the purposes of practical training in the practice of architecture, the value of the proposed school at Cambridge will amount to nothing at all”.
- (3) That the school would not enable students who had passed through it to find immediate employment with architects in practice; and
- (4) That we deprecated the proposed school “not less in the interests of the Universities than of our own art. The proper function of a University as we conceive it, and the ideal (at all events until lately) pursued at Oxford and Cambridge, is to supply an education which will enable its graduates to approach their practical work in life from a higher standpoint, with a firmer grasp of its possibilities, and a clearer vision of its relations to life as a whole. . . . Meanwhile, success is not the sole and only aim of mental training, and it would be a matter of deep regret if there should be any ground for supposing that our older Universities so regarded it.”

Looking back on this episode twenty-five years later, I can only regret that the warning we gave has passed unheeded; the Universities continue to multiply schools in the vain hope of finding immediate practical outlets for their graduates, and enabling them to escape the inevitable post-graduate course of technical training. In so

doing they have opened one more floodgate to the flowing tide of commercialism, and they have deprived architects of their last faint claim to belong to a learned profession.

I went down to Cambridge soon afterwards on a deputation to meet the Syndicate and discuss the proposed school. We met Waldstein and Ridgway, and after a great deal of talk came away leaving things much as they were. Waldstein as usual was enthusiastic and voluble. He was a strange mixture, for he was an Austrian, born in New York and educated at Heidelberg; indeed, there is a story that on one occasion, when Villiers Stanford thought that Waldstein was too officious, the irate musician shouted out, "Why don't you go back to one of your three — countries?"<sup>1</sup> Waldstein was not a scholar, and his studies at Heidelberg in archaeology, international law and philosophy had resulted in a certain inaccuracy and vagueness of outlook which rather discounted the value of his theories; but he was a fluent speaker, and I recollect that when I first heard of him forty years ago he had already made a considerable name for himself at Cambridge. Some years later I met him again on the Standing Committee of Advice appointed by the Government to consider the whole question of State-aided training in art, more particularly in relation to the annual National Competition of Schools of Art, which has since been abolished.

Ridgway was quite another sort of man. He was a classical scholar of great knowledge, with an unusually wide range of interests, who discussed with impartial enthusiasm "the Origin and Influence of the thoroughbred horse", "the Origin of the Indian drama" and various other "origins". He was awkward of body and extremely

<sup>1</sup> In 1913 Stanford, Waldstein and I were invited by Macmillans to collaborate in a series of popular books for America. Stanford was to write on Music, Waldstein on Sculpture and I on Architecture. The terms were liberal, but I wrote to Macmillans in 1913, and again in 1914, that it was not a question of terms, but that I simply had not the time for the research necessary "to satisfy my own standard of scholarly work". In 1918 Mr. Hudson wanted me to write on gardens for *Country Life*, but I declined for the same reason.

pugnacious, always anxious that somebody should tread on his coat-tails, in order that he might deal with him in his well-known summary manner. When he died, a distinguished Professor, once his pupil, said of him, "In a Cambridge crowd he moved through the streets like an old lion". *Foenum habet in cornu*, a dangerous man to meet in dispute. I recollect that when we met the Cambridge Syndicate I maintained that a technical school at a University which set out "to provide a liberal education" was a contradiction in terms. Ridgway, though I believe he really agreed with me, was furious, and as he left the room he kicked me on the shin. I believe that in fact he was so short-sighted that he did not see, but the effect, coming after a violent outburst, was so comic that I burst out laughing, Syndicate and all. Old Leslie, R.A., the painter, once did exactly the same thing, as he left an Assembly at the Royal Academy, angry at his failure to alter the design I had made for the memorial to Alma-Tadema, which now lies on the floor of the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral.

Meanwhile, as Chairman of the Board of Architectural Education of the Institute, I had been working on a scheme for an advanced course in architectural training. It seemed to me that the existing systems began too soon and were not carried far enough. Boys who hoped to be architects were usually withdrawn from school at an average age of about seventeen, and just at the time when they should have entered on the culminating period of their education, they were sent to one or other of the architectural schools, the Architectural Association, London University, the schools of Liverpool or Manchester or one of the great provincial centres. At these schools, though the training was carried up to a certain point, for practical reasons it had to be fitted to the capacities of the average boy, and there was no provision for a final school of advanced design. The Royal College was useless for this purpose, because in addition to architectural students, it had to provide for general students who wished to learn the rudiments of architectural design for purposes other than



that of Architecture. Moreover, the principal object of the Royal College in those days was to enable candidates for Art masterships to obtain certificates that they were qualified to instruct in half a dozen arts, when in fact they had not mastered the technique of one.

It seemed to me that the only school in existence which might, if reorganized, become a final school of Architecture was the School of the Royal Academy, the only school with a tradition behind it dating from Soane, Cockerell, Gilbert Scott and others; a School, moreover, which possessed in its architect members a staff of Visitors more authoritative than any that could be found in any school of the country. In the summer of 1909 there had been a somewhat acrimonious correspondence in *The Builder* on the subject of a Diploma Course. Brumwell Thomas had suggested it; Maule of the Architectural Association and F. M. Simpson of the London University School of Architecture were in favour of it. Reilly of Liverpool, though not opposed in principle, thought that in the absence of any generally accepted method of training in the architectural schools, the time had not come for a Diploma Course. I was urged to take the matter up, and in December 1909 I drew up a memorandum of a scheme for an advanced school of Architectural Design. In this I pointed out that there was a widespread feeling that

existing methods of training were inadequate, and that they tended to stereotype mediocrity, owing to the unfortunate anxiety of the schools to limit their training to the bare modicum of practical equipment that would enable their innumerable students to obtain immediate employment.

The subjects set in the schools were trivial, the design taught was rudimentary,<sup>1</sup> and the staff were necessarily wanting in experience. What was wanted was a school of advanced design, to carry on the training of the more promising students from the point at which it was left by

<sup>1</sup> It is only fair to say that Prof. Reilly and Adshead, who were in charge of the Liverpool school, were making strenuous efforts to rescue architectural training from the dull routine of training current at the time.

the school. An additional reason for such a school was the proposal to establish a British School of the Arts at Rome, and I suggested that should such a school be established with valuable scholarships, only those students who had gone through this advanced course should be eligible to compete. I pointed out that the Royal Academy Architectural School was the only one which could form the nucleus of this school of advanced design, on account of its unique position and prestige, and also because the whole effort of the School was concentrated on design.

I had, however, also to suggest that the Academy School would require complete remodelling. In the first place, some definite manner of design would have to be adopted. Under the existing system each of the four Visitors set whatever subject they pleased and criticized the results as they liked. The result of the absence of system was that students became confused, and I pointed out that in default of any tradition,

much of the benefit, intellectual stimulus, advance in thought and clarification of ideas that might result from work along common and clearly defined lines is lost . . . the students tend to think that one manner is as good as another, and attach more importance to details than to large conception in design, perpetuating and intensifying one of the worst faults of modern English Architecture. In any system of training of students some definite data must be taken for granted.

Then, again, the standard of admission was far too low. The Academy schools suffered from the admission of half-trained students from Polytechnics and Schools of Art, and it would be necessary to insist that in regard to construction, materials, elementary applied science and mathematics, all candidates should have passed the intermediate examination of the R.I.B.A., and their capacity in design and draughtsmanship would be tested by a design made in the Academy School and adjudged by the Architect Visitors in the School. Finally, it was essential that the School should be a day-school, not merely a school open for two hours in the evening.

In order to elicit opinion, I sent out the following questions:

- (1) Is such a school demanded?
- (2) What should be the condition of admission?
- (3) How should the school be run?
- (4) Who should be the master?
- (5) Should it be a day-school?

I received answers from Ricardo, Lethaby, Newton, Dauber, Pite, Thomas and Maule, which were on the whole favourable. In January 1910 Aston Webb wrote to me:

I think we shall get in George<sup>1</sup> . . . take care of yourself across country; you are our one and only A.R.A. I am glad you are working at the Diploma Course. I quite agree that the R.A. ought to take it up. I went to Simpson's committee the other night. We all blessed his scheme<sup>2</sup> to cost a trifle of £100,000, but did not get much forrader. Best wishes to you all for the New Year, and when it ends may we still have a constitution and a House of Lords.

I had a charming letter from Poynter, who wrote in May 1909: "The proposal has my warmest sympathy". In spite of this generally favourable reception the existing Schools were much divided and unwilling to co-operate, and I came to the conclusion that it would be a waste of time to carry the scheme further for the present. Aston Webb wrote to me from Sidmouth in December 1910: "I am quite willing to try for it if we can see any chance of getting the money, or even if we could formulate a scheme which would get general support". In my reply to Webb I said, "The whole situation at the R.A. is profoundly discouraging". I had been passed over again in favour of an Engraver, Frank Short, and I pointed out that "I had hoped to tackle the reorganization of the Architectural School at the Academy in person, but had no intention of wasting time in attempting this through other men as intermediaries".

<sup>1</sup> Ernest George as A.R.A.

<sup>2</sup> For the school at Rome. See p. 149 *et seq.*

For some years previously I had been invited by the Board of Education to inspect and report on various Art Schools in the country, including the Royal College of Art, which I inspected annually with George Frampton and Robert Colton, the sculptors. We reported on the modelling submitted in the National Art Competition in 1912, and had to say that "many of the designs ought to have been stopped in the school at the start". In this competition 333 schools competed and 11,247 works were submitted, the result of an incredible amount of misdirected effort and wasted labour.<sup>1</sup> The results seemed to me so desperate, that I came out into the open, and had the hardihood to give an address on "State-aided Art Training in England" to the National Society of Art Masters in the theatre of the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington. I pointed out that the State had never really made up its mind what it wanted to do with its national Art training, and had in fact flooded the market with imperfectly trained artists and craftsmen, who lowered the standard of work and made it extremely difficult for the really competent men ("men who will rank among the productive assets of the country") to keep their heads above water.

The remedy I suggested was to reduce the number of Art Schools, to limit the function of the smaller schools and make them preliminary and subordinate to a few central schools which should be developed both in equipment and personnel. The Instructors in these schools should be selected for proved ability in their art, and not for their successful negotiation of certain mechanical tests. My suggestions were extremely unpopular with the Art masters, and one of their leading spirits called me all sorts of names, but looking back I think I was right. What I wanted to establish was a graduated system of schools, beginning at the bottom with simple instruction in drawing in the primary school. If the pupil showed real ability, he would be enabled, by means of prizes and bursaries, to proceed through small arts schools to one or other of the main

<sup>1</sup> In the 1910 competition 13,097 works were submitted.

central schools of the district. By this means there would be a gradual elimination of unpromising students, and those that survived might get really adequate training.

It still seemed to me, however, that the keystone of the arch was missing, namely, a Final School of the Fine Arts. The question of establishing such a school had already been raised in a report by the Standing Committee of Advice to the Board of Education on Art Training, of which I had been an active member from the first. The President of the Board in reply to this report had said:

The question of making better provision for a Central School of Fine Art is one on which the President is not in a position to express an opinion. It is impossible for him even to consider it except in relation to the function and responsibility of the Royal Academy, of whose views on the subject he has not been informed.

I had already, in my private capacity, urged the establishment of a Final School of Fine Arts in the Royal College to be run by the Academy, in a memorandum to Charles Trevelyan in April 1912, and in two letters to Selby Bigge, Secretary to the Board in 1913 and 1914. In view of the President's reply, it seemed to me that the time had come for the Royal Academy to deal with the matter, and I again took up the idea of developing a final School out of the schools of the Royal Academy; this time in collaboration with the State. I drew up an elaborate memorandum calling attention to the necessity of correlating the various schools of art, and of a consecutive scheme of training leading up from the Elementary School to a final school for advanced students. I wanted the Royal Academy to undertake the establishment and control of this school, "a final school on a large scale, more carefully organized and more completely equipped than any school now in existence; a link between existing schools and the new school at Rome" (my memo. of February 1914). The proposal, of course, involved the complete reorganization of the Academy schools, their migration to new school

buildings to be provided by the State and the conversion of the Architectural School from an evening school to a whole-time day school. I made suggestions as to the organization of the school, and pointed out that in view of the demand for such a school, and the reference to the Academy by the President of the Board of Education, the psychological moment had come for the Academy to act, and for its representatives to confer with the Board of Education on the whole situation.

My proposals were seriously entertained by the Council, and a meeting with the President of the Board was actually arranged, but there was one fatal flaw in my proposals. In my memorandum to the Council of the Academy (February 1914) I had pointed out that although the control and management of the school would be in the hands of the Academy, the State would want to be represented on the Governing Body. Poynter had already written to me:

You refer to a "State-aided school" under the control or direction of the Academy. This would imply a right of interference (*i.e.* inspection on the part of the Government of the Academy teaching) which would in my opinion be a serious encroachment on the independence and authority of the Royal Academy, and might have very far-reaching and possibly disastrous results not only to our existence as a body but to the whole system of teaching.

Poynter was a wise old man. He knew of the dangerous attempts to undermine the independence of the Academy made on quite false issues in 1830-40, and it has been from the first a cardinal point in the policy of the Academy to keep State interference at arm's length.<sup>1</sup> The Academy had an interview with the President of the Board of Education, but owing to a breakdown from overwork I was unable to attend and was having a rest on Sir George Warrender's flagship in Weymouth Bay. Nothing came of

<sup>1</sup> I have dealt with this in an article in the *London Mercury* (February 1932) entitled, "The French Academies and the Royal Academy—a Comparison and a Conclusion".

the interview, and, thinking it over since, I have come to the conclusion that nothing could have come of it. The difficulties were insuperable. The Board of Education could not make up its mind what it wanted. It was afraid of the National Society of Art Masters and excused itself by saying that it was all the fault of the artists, who could not agree. The Academy would have had to move its schools elsewhere, which it was most unwilling to do; also it would have had to agree to some form of State interference which, as Poynter said, might have been disastrous.

Poynter was right in his warning, and I sometimes think that less than justice has been done to him both as an artist and as a man. He was a sagacious President, a gentleman and a scholar, an accomplished artist with wide knowledge of all the arts, of architecture and sculpture as well as of painting, and he possessed a quality rare in painters—that of sympathy with arts other than his own. He had the interests of the Academy profoundly at heart, and regarded those interests not as a mere question of the day, but as extending far into the future. It was unfortunate for the Academy that, owing to his advanced age and failing health, he felt himself unable to carry on and resigned his office. On various occasions when I suggested reforms I found the way blocked, not by Poynter who knew history, but by the Old Guard who, like the Bourbons, forgot nothing and learnt nothing. When I first came on to the Council of the R.A., Poynter used to ignore my suggestions and pass me by, but having once convinced him that I meant business, he was always courteous and sympathetic. In a letter that Napier Hemy wrote to me, in May 1911, I find this description of Poynter:

Cold, hard, shy, unsympathetic, almost inhuman he appears. Yet he is a kind-hearted man, a generous, sympathetic, good fellow, the hardest worker of us all, caring for all that concerns the Academy and with everybody's interest at heart. It is no use asking why he is not like Leighton. It is a natural reserve, a shyness he has never been able to get over and as hard as a nut outside, but when you have cracked it!

This was real praise from a man who did not give his praise at random. Hemy's letter was in answer to one of mine, in which I suppose I had cursed the painters for electing a painter to fill an architect's vacancy of full Academician, and he ended his letter by adding:

Perhaps you don't realize how few painters understand architecture and therefore don't care about it. Men like Tadema, Sargent, Abbey and myself are amongst the few who have studied it, and we are the men who are at the back of you and so are the sculptors. But the great majority of painters care only for pictures.

The Standing Committee of Advice on State-aided Art Training appointed by the Government some years before came to an end in 1916. It was started with the best intention by the Board of Education to consider the reorganization of State-aided Art training throughout the country. The Royal College of Art, established to enable students to qualify themselves as "highly skilled handicraftsmen or designers for manufacturers",<sup>1</sup> had become a forcing-house for Art masters. The authorities were afraid of the Art masters, and, as usual in England, dealt with art training in terms of politics. The results as shown in the works of students in the various schools were unsatisfactory and produced at considerable cost to the State, and in the opinion of competent and experienced artists, the State-aided schools were dragging down the industrial art of the country to a disastrous level of incompetence. They were controlled by the Board of Education, a department whose officials, whatever their merits, know no more about the Arts than the man in the street, and they appear to be in the hands of their Inspectors of Art Schools, and to have no ascertainable policy in regard to State-aided training in this country.

The Standing Committee of Advice, after a great deal of discussion and much wasted time, drew up an important report on State-aided training in art in 1912,

<sup>1</sup> Circular 897 of Board of Education, Whitehall. March 1915.



which was issued by the Board in 1913. The Committee recommended

(1) that all workers in the arts and applied arts should receive a thorough grounding in drawing as the basis of specialized training; (2) that the Schools should co-operate instead of competing with one another, and should become part of one organization in which individual schools will take their appointed place and fulfil individual functions in accordance with their capacity and resources; (3) that tests of admission should be much higher; (4) that design should be taught in connection with execution; (5) that schools should be grouped and graded; (6) that there should be a Central School of Fine Arts and a Central School of Design and Handicrafts, both in London; (7) that teachers should be selected not on certificates, but on the record of their executed works.

The report was received by the President of the Board, who replied in 1914 in general terms which evaded the point, and, with the exception of some unimportant modifications of the examination and awards of the Royal College, nothing was done. In 1916 the Standing Committee called the attention of the Board to this state of things, and were informed that their proposals were likely to arouse protests from the Art masters, and therefore any reorganization must stand over. The Standing Committee replied that this answer was "inconclusive and unsatisfactory", and that as the position and qualifications of the Art masters was a vital issue in any school, "to advance their possible protests as an argument for inaction was tantamount to shutting down any attempt at reform". They pointed out that it was "generally admitted that the existing system is wasteful and inefficient", and that as the need for economy was urgent (1916), here was an excellent opportunity for cutting down useless expenditure. The Standing Committee pointed out that they felt it their duty to press their views on the Board, and added that if the Board continued to disregard their suggestions, no useful purpose could be served by their tendering further advice to the Board. This Memorandum, which was drafted by

Kenneth Anderson and me, was signed by the following members of the Standing Committee:

Kenneth Anderson	Charles Heape
Charles Allom	Selwyn Image
Reginald Blomfield	Edward Poynter
Fred. Burridge	Harry Powell
George Clausen	Frank Wedgwood
Napier Clavering	Charles Waldstein
Arthur Cope	Frank Warner

The Board did nothing and the Committee dissolved. The whole episode was characteristic of Government Committees of this kind. The Board of Education, with the best intentions in the first instance, invited certain people with experience in art training to act as a Standing Committee of Advice, and the discussions began well enough on practical lines under an able chairman, E. K. Chambers. But the political element soon crept in. People were appointed members of the Committee with little knowledge of art or training, but with a laudable desire to distinguish themselves by service on some sort of Government Committee. Much of the discussion was a waste of time, and the memorandum from which I have just quoted was the final protest of those members of the Committee who had a great many other things to do, and did not intend to devote any more of their time to a futile and perfectly thankless task. My one token of recognition for years of useless attendance on this Standing Committee of Advice on State-aided Training in Art is a black leather portfolio stamped with the letters "G.R." and a crown.

## CHAPTER XIII

Ateliers—The Preservation of Ancient Buildings and the Advisory Board  
--Tintern Abbey—Lord Milner—Town Planning—A Ministry of Fine  
Art—Lord Curzon and the Carlton Club—History of French Archi-  
tecture.

LOOKING back on notes and correspondence and extracts from the papers, I find that about twenty years ago all sorts of movements were in the air. Schemes for the planning of Greater London, for the introduction of the French system of Ateliers among architects, for the care of Ancient Monuments, for a British School of the Arts at Rome and for a Ministry of Fine Arts in England were being keenly discussed. Some of these schemes faded away, but three of them have resulted in permanent institutions of real value to the community. In 1912 an attempt was made to introduce the Atelier system of training, that is, to establish studios in which young architects could work in competition with others, under the general direction of architects of experience and authority in actual practice. M. Pascal's atelier was a famous example, well known to many English architects.<sup>1</sup> An atelier was actually started, and in an address to the Architectural Association in May 1913 I said that I "thought that, if properly handled, it might play a very valuable part in their system of training in architecture". I pointed out, however, that to make it really effective, a final and advanced school of architecture appeared to be necessary, on lines analogous to those of the École des Beaux Arts, and "that the atelier without the final school,

<sup>1</sup> The R.I.B.A. awarded the Royal Gold Medal of the Institute to M. Pascal in 1914. For an account of the atelier system and its relation to the École des Beaux Arts see *L'Art d'architecture*, chap. iv., by M. Louvet, with a preface by M. Pascal.

or the final school without the atelier, was a cart without the horse". The illustration was only partially true, as *The Builder* pointed out at the time; but in any case, owing to the complete failure of the principal Schools of Architecture to agree on a common policy, the final School was not established, and the idea of ateliers disappeared. An attempt to introduce the atelier system, under the general control of the Academy, was made in 1919 by the Architectural Association. In a document signed by Maurice Webb, President, and Giles Gilbert Scott, Vice-President, it was stated that, as a result of a meeting with representatives of the Board of Architectural Education, the Architectural Association and the Society of Architects, two ateliers were already established, and two more were hoped for. Various proposals were made, including the grant of a diploma, but the whole scheme fell through, and nothing more was heard of it. I do not myself think it was workable, though well-intentioned. In actual fact the Schools were convinced that they could do all that was necessary for aspiring students with their own staff and on their own premises.

The protection of Ancient Monuments and the right method of dealing with them had long been a burning question. The Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings had for years done its best to call attention to their historical importance, and its activity might even have been more successful than it was if the zeal of its energetic and enthusiastic secretary had been tempered by urbanity; but he and his colleagues in the Society had ample grounds for their wrath in the ravages perpetrated in our churches by the ecclesiastical authorities and their architects. The reaction from the "restoration craze" of the third quarter of the nineteenth century was very necessary. Unfortunately it came after irreparable mischief had been done; but public opinion was at length roused, and in 1912 a Committee of both Houses was appointed, with Lord Plymouth as chairman, to consider three Bills dealing with the preservation of ancient monuments.

There were two camps—one group wished to have the

custody of ancient buildings handed over to the Office of Works, the other group criticized the fitness of that department for that purpose and advocated the granting of the necessary powers to an Advisory Board, with the corollary that architects should be sufficiently represented on the Board. Sir Schomberg McDonnell, who had been Permanent Secretary to H.M. Office of Works, thought that the care of ancient monuments should be entrusted to the Office of Works to be dealt with by Order in Council. He suggested that there should be a Chief Inspector, with four assistants for England, four for Scotland and two for Wales, and that the Advisory Board should not only advise on restorations or additions to ecclesiastical buildings, but should have power to intervene. Mr. Peers (now Sir Charles Peers) urged that a schedule of monuments of recognized historical interest should be prepared, and that buildings so scheduled should not be touched without the consent of the Office of Works or of the Advisory Board. I was asked to give evidence, and called attention to the injury done to cathedrals, the most important national monuments in England, and urged that the Advisory Board should be strengthened, that the Office of Works was not a suitable body to be given the care of ancient buildings, and that a special department in connection with the Advisory Board should be created for the purpose. I also suggested that monuments of later date than 1700 should be protected if necessary, and remarked that so far as domestic architecture was concerned, the owners in this country were more alive to the importance of their preservation than owners on the Continent. I even had the temerity to say that the tendency of the day was rather towards sentimentalism than vandalism, having in mind the boom in old buildings due to the enterprise of papers such as *Country Life*.

In 1913 the Ancient Monuments Consolidation and Amendment Act was passed, the executive power was handed over to the Office of Works, and the Advisory Board was restricted to advice on buildings to be scheduled and

on proposals for dealing with buildings included in the schedule.

The Advisory Board for England was constituted as follows:

Mr. (now Sir) Lionel Earle  
Lord Burghclere  
The Earl of Crawford  
Sir Aston Webb  
Mr. (now Sir) Reginald Blomfield  
Sir Hercules Read  
Sir Charles Trevelyan  
Professor Haverfield  
Mr. Reginald Smith  
Mr. (now Sir) Charles Peers, Chief Inspector  
of Ancient Monuments

I find that in his evidence (1912) Peers called attention to the "injury being done to the Roman Wall in Northumberland by quarrying". The wall was being gradually destroyed, but the quarrying yielded a royalty of £1300 a year, and heavy compensation would have to be paid. These things should not have happened, "and in future such cases should come before the Advisory Board. There was no reason why the Board should not consider compensation." That evidence and advice was given nearly twenty years ago; yet Governments did nothing, and it was not till last year that the scandal of the destruction of one of the most important historical monuments in the country became so flagrant that the Labour Government moved in the matter. These things could not have happened in France or in Germany. To do the Office of Works justice they have done all that they could since those days to preserve our historical monuments, and under the skilful and sympathetic guidance of the Secretary of the Office of Works and the Chief Inspector have done it exceedingly well, because they have made it a guiding principle to do nothing more than is strictly necessary to preserve the building, and have steered clear of all such fancy restora-

tions as in France have deprived some of their famous monuments of nearly all their historical value.

I have been a member of the Advisory Board ever since its first establishment, and nearly lost my life in its service. A question had arisen as to the treatment of the ruins of Tintern Abbey. The south wall of the nave was leaning inwards in a dangerous way, and Frank Baines, the Engineer of the Office of Works, proposed to tie it back to the south wall of the south aisle by an ingenious steel grid which was to be concealed in a new roof over the aisle. The alternative was massive stone buttresses on the north side to hold up the wall. Earle asked Lethaby and me to come down with him to Tintern and advise on the spot. Early one morning we swung down from Paddington in a slip carriage, ate what breakfast we could in the swaying train, and when we came to the Abbey, rather upset by our journey, we were invited to go up a newel stair to reach the top of the nave arch. Lethaby and Earle declined. I went up the stairs, and at the top found I had to walk across the wall above the nave arch, some sixty feet or more above the ground, over a rough, wet and slippery surface, about 4 to 5 feet wide, without any rail or even a guide-rope; moreover, my shoes had india-rubber soles. I did not like it a bit, but obstinacy has its uses, and not to be outdone by the officials of the Office of Works, I persevered and got safely across to the other side. One slip and I should have shared the fate of the architect of Ely.<sup>1</sup>

On the whole, the Advisory Board has done useful work, though sometimes it has been caught napping, and for political and financial reasons its advice has not always been followed. Nowadays we seem incapable of producing men of sufficient resolution to go all out for their object when they are convinced that it is worth going for. One sometimes longs for men of the type of Lord Palmerston, not particularly intellectual, casual, sometimes apparently reckless, but shrewd and cool, men who do not allow them-

<sup>1</sup> Basevi, who was killed by falling off the scaffolding of the Cathedral.

selves to be diverted from their aims by mere political convenience, if they believe that those aims are in the interests of their country. Lord Milner is another instance of another sort. If somewhat academic, Milner was a man of commanding intellect, who was prepared to take all risks in pursuit of definite and considered ideas. His work in South Africa, much misunderstood at the time, was devoted to establishing peace and good government in a community broken up by the war, and if he could secure that he was wholly indifferent to unpopularity.

I used often to see him at Sturry in Kent, where he had called me in to help with the design of the garden and alterations to the house, and he was one of the very few men I have met who really held me when the talk was of politics. Without the least trace of priggishness or pedantry, he spoke on that usually dismal subject as Aristotle, or Plato, might have spoken--and some of his appreciations of contemporary politicians were so searching that I must refrain from quoting them. Milner had no sort of athletic aptitude, but a good deal of courage. My soldier brother told me that he met him at some public function after the Boer War, when the horse which Milner was riding shied and Milner, who was no horseman, fell off. But though he must have been badly shaken, he remounted at once without turning a hair. Few men that I have met have impressed me more than Milner, not only on account of his high and clear intelligence, but also on account of his transparent sincerity, his wide sympathies and his never-failing modesty.

The Town Planning Institute was established in 1913. The absence of co-operation between the various authorities, and the lack of forethought in London improvements, had long been a matter of common knowledge, and the claims of Greater London for some comprehensive treatment were becoming more and more insistent. A conference was held at the R.I.B.A. between the Institute Town Planning Committee and representatives of the Royal Academy, the Institution of Civil Engineers, the Surveyors' Institution, the Institution of Municipal and



County Engineers and the London Society, and in 1913 a letter was sent to Mr. Asquith signed by Sir Edward Poynter as President of the Royal Academy, Mr. E. G. Strutt, President of the Surveyors' Institution, Mr. R. J. Thomas, President of the Institution of Municipal and County Engineers, Mr. W. C. Unwin, President of the Institution of Civil Engineers, and by myself as President of the Royal Institute of British Architects, requesting him to receive a deputation. It was pointed out in this letter that town-planning schemes were being prepared in the districts round London without any power to co-ordinate these schemes, or to ensure that they carried out the recommendations as to main roads made by the Royal Commission and Traffic Department of the Board of Trade. It was stated that the authorities concerned numbered some seventy to eighty.

Mr. Asquith received the deputation, introduced by me as President of the Institute, and suggested that the President of the Board of Trade should be consulted as to some temporary method of co-ordination, but reserved his opinion as to the character, position and function of any central authority to deal with the matter. The President of the Board of Trade thereupon called a general conference, and suggested that London should be divided up into six main areas, and that conferences should be held for each of those areas, composed of representatives of the authorities concerned, of the Institute and other professional bodies, "to study the problems of their district collectively". For all I know they are studying those problems still. The Central Authority does not exist, and, as happened in the case of the Charing Cross Bridge, the authorities concerned usually find themselves at sixes and sevens in regard to any really vital points. On one point all our town planners, whether professional or amateur, seem to be agreed. They are quite determined not to leave the country alone, and that free, happy-go-lucky, casual old England, so characteristic of our race, will soon be little more than a sad memory of the past.

I find that in February 1914 a meeting was called at the Institute to consider proposals for the creation of a Ministry of Fine Art. The conference was attended by Mr. Edwin Ball, Sir Thomas Brock, Colton, Cope, Dawber, Dewhurst, Frampton, Lanchester, David Murray, Frank Short, Solomon, Reynolds Stephens, Aston Webb and myself. It was resolved to submit to Mr. Asquith a scheme for the creation of a Ministry of Art to consist of a Minister, with a permanent Secretary, and an advisory council of eighteen members, a certain number retiring annually by rotation. The members were to be recognized authorities on architecture, painting and sculpture, an antiquary, a musician, a dramatist and a literary man. The duties of the Council would be to advise the Minister on all aesthetic matters of public interest; it would deal with National Museums and Galleries,<sup>1</sup> "the laying out and changes in cities, streets, public buildings, parks, etc., the preservation and the amenities of towns, villages and countrysides, and the acquisition and preservation of national art treasures", a prodigious programme which could not possibly be carried out.

Indeed, the hand of the amateur and the enthusiasm of the artist are evident in the drafting. The proposed Ministry would have had to take over the direction of the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the National Gallery, the labours now undertaken by the Town Planning Institute, the societies for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings and of Rural England, to say nothing of the Opera, the Stage and the Picture Palace. Even had it been possible, it is very doubtful whether a Ministry of Fine Art would have been accepted in this country. The proposal was dropped, but it paved the way for the far less ambitious scheme of the Royal Fine Art Commission, established in 1924 mainly through the efforts of Sir Lionel Earle, Lord Crawford, Sir Aston Webb and myself. The proposal was resisted at first in Parliament, among others by Lord Curzon, but when his lordship

<sup>1</sup> Report in *The Times*, February 19, 1914.

was assured that he, of course, would be a member of the Commission he became a warm supporter of the scheme, and when the Commission was appointed was one of its most useful members almost up to the time of his death, for he had a clear brain and wide knowledge.

I met Lord Curzon again in connection with the refacing of the Carlton Club, which was carried out from my designs. The Caen stone of which it was rebuilt had failed completely. If worked back, the stone underneath seemed to be sound, but very soon disintegrated, and as Smirke's design, based on an Italian palace, appeared quite unsuitable, involved the replacement of the Aberdeen granite columns, and would have been very costly, I re-designed the whole of the three fronts in Portland stone. I do not think Curzon liked the design, and when, in accordance with the decision of the Committee, I placed the crest of the Club above the centre bay, he wrote furious letters to the Chairman abusing the design. An interview was arranged attended by Lord Curzon, Lord Crawford, Lord Younger and myself. Curzon went off in his best manner, and after some ten minutes of eloquence said he had consulted other architects, and they had condemned this feature. Here I stopped him, and having a shrewd idea who the architects were that he had consulted, I said point-blank that the architects, in criticizing the work of a colleague without reference to him, had been guilty of unprofessional conduct. The effect of this remark was immediate and amazing: it appeared to knock the bottom out of Curzon's allocution. He staggered on to a very lame conclusion, and I then explained that the position of the crest had been settled in consultation with the committee of the Club, and that if it was to be altered at his Lordship's request, I must insist on this being recorded in the minutes. We parted with thanks to each other for this courteous conversation, and Lord Younger, who had shown Curzon out, reported that the latter had remarked that "Blomfield had said just what he expected". I rather wondered at his having raised the point, but perhaps he expected to carry all before him.

I think he had acted on impulse, and the point which I put to him had probably never occurred to him at all.

The Royal Fine Art Commission has now been at work for seven years. Of the original members only Lord Crawford, Sir E. Lutyens and I remain, and our invaluable secretary, Mr. Bradshaw. The Commission has done some useful work within its very limited terms of reference, as we only deal with matters of public interest, and when invited to do so by the authorities concerned. We acted with resolution in the case of the Royal Galleries in the House of Lords when we were consulted about Brangwyn's frescoes. The design was as remarkable as one would expect from that very able artist, but the question was not as to its artistic merit, but whether the frescoes could be carried out in the Royal Gallery without completely upsetting the great panels of Maclise, entirely altering the whole character of the Gallery, and cutting it off from the rest of the Houses of Parliament. The Commission had tried to obtain information from Lord Carrington, the Lord High Chamberlain, but could get nothing out of him, and the designs were presented to us as *un fait accompli*. All we could do was to report with regret that in our opinion the designs were unsuitable for the Gallery, and our advice was taken. On the other hand, quite recently, when the Commission reported unanimously against the proposed designs of the new South Africa House on the east side of Trafalgar Square, on the ground that it would destroy the architectural composition of the Square by introducing irrelevant motives, our advice was not taken by the Minister, and the chance of completing Trafalgar Square as it was intended by the Architects of the National Gallery and the College of Physicians is now irretrievably lost. Like most unpaid Government Commissions, advice from the Royal Fine Art Commission is only followed when it suits the convenience of the Government on other grounds.

I am surprised at the amount of work one used to get through in those years before the war. In addition to all

the unpaid work of these multifarious Committees, there was my own practice as an architect; and all along I had been working at my *History of French Architecture*, of which the first two volumes were published by Bell in 1911. Every autumn, from 1897 onwards, I had travelled about in France with my wife and daughter, examining old buildings and collecting materials. I endeavoured to "quarter the ground in France and to study on the spot the buildings referred to in the text",<sup>1</sup> and greatly enjoyed doing so, because the search brought me to all sorts of places seldom visited by tourists, and unknown in England—such, for example, as the perfect little seventeenth-century town, not far from Chinon, that Richelieu had built for his court from Lemer cier's designs; or Brouage, that vast fort, now an almost deserted village in the desolate marshes of the Charente, "the Aigues Mortes of the Saintonge", as it has been inaccurately called. My reasons for undertaking this considerable work were the deep interest I had always taken in French architecture, the wholly erroneous view, as it seemed to me, taken by French writers of the development of French architecture in the period with which I was dealing, and, lastly, the fact that I really enjoyed this method of historical research, and recording the results to the best of my ability. It seemed to me that both in France and in England a good deal of the history of architecture ought to be rewritten with reference to the buildings themselves, in addition to whatever documentary evidence was available, and I was fortunate in being able to illustrate my history by means of an unusually complete collection of seventeenth-century engravings by Marot, Silvestre and Perelle, which I came across in the library of Mellerstain, near Kelso, the property of Lord Binning.

Owing to pressure of work, the war and other reasons, I was not able to complete my work till ten years later, 1921, when Bell published for me in two further volumes a

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to a *History of French Architecture from the Reign of Charles VIII till the Death of Mazarin*, by Reginald Blomfield. (G. Bell and Sons, 1911.)

*History of French Architecture from the Death of Mazarin till the Death of Louis XV (1661-1774)*. For the whole period of the reign of Louis XIV I was able to draw on the invaluable *Comptes des Bâtimens du Roi*, edited by M. Guiffrey, a work of immense labour and research and indispensable for any serious account of the architecture of that time. It had taken me just twenty years to complete my history and I was quite sorry when it was finished, but I had no inclination to carry it further. In my view the latter part of the eighteenth century saw the end of a great tradition. Prompted, and indeed almost compelled by a most arbitrary theorist,<sup>1</sup> men such as Chalgrin, Brongniart, Antoine and Gondouin set about the revival of the antique in its most literal and pedantic form, and in so doing opened the way for those other revivalists, Gothic, "free Renaissance and what not, who have since reduced the art of architecture to a game of battledore and shuttlecock".<sup>2</sup> I see no reason to change anything in that sentence written twelve years ago.

I dedicated my first two volumes to Norman Shaw "in admiration of his genius and example", and have always been glad that I was able to do so before he died. Not only was Shaw a great architect—his Scotland Yard is one of the best and most original buildings erected in London since Somerset House—but he was a strong and remarkable personality, rather austere till you realized his keen sense of humour and his very real sympathy. In the welter and confusion of the arts that has followed the war, people have forgotten the work that he did in revolutionizing English domestic architecture. He was the first to give me a glimpse of what architecture might be, *pedibus lucerna meis* in my long and arduous pursuit of that difficult art.

<sup>1</sup> Quatremère de Quincy.

<sup>2</sup> Introduction to a *History of French Architecture, 1661-1774*.

## CHAPTER XIV

Delhi—The British School at Rome—Lord Esher—P.R.I.B.A.—Orpen's  
Portrait of Leonard Stokes.

THE whole of my career from 1912 onwards might have been different if events had followed the line which I had every reason at the time to suppose that they would. In 1912 Mr. F. Lutyens<sup>1</sup> was appointed architect for the New Delhi by Mr. Asquith, but though he was known to be a very clever young man it was thought desirable that another architect should be appointed as his colleague in this vast undertaking. Friends of mine, both in Parliament and out of it, were moving for my appointment, when one day I received a letter from Lutyens asking me if I would be his colleague in this work. I replied that I would and informed my friends that there was no need for any further action in the matter as it appeared to have settled itself. I heard nothing further, but some two or three months later an announcement appeared in the papers that Mr. Herbert Baker, an old fellow pupil of Lutyens in Ernest George's office, had been appointed as his colleague. The result seems hardly to have answered expectations, for the two colleagues could not agree, and when later on Lutyens spoke to me of their disagreement I reminded him of his having dropped me without any intimation that he was doing so, and asked him why, in the vulgar phrase, he had "left me in the cart". His reply was, "I thought you would be too strong for me", in which I think he was mistaken, for I should have played the game. I was very busy at the time, and did not pay much attention to the incident, but I was deprived of the opportunity of work

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Edwin Lutyens, R.A.

on a great scale and in the grand manner, which is the ambition of every architect worthy of the name, and, on personal grounds, I regretted missing India. My eldest son, now a High Church parson and secretary to the Oxford Mission to Calcutta, had gone out to Bengal in the Indian Civil Service in 1911. My soldier brother commanded divisions first at Mhow, and later at Peshawar; my father-in-law, Henry Burra, went out to India in 1858, one of the last of old John Company's Indian civilians. Going further back, my father's favourite brother, a Captain in the Indian army, died in India, and another brother, Edward Henry, served in the Indian Cavalry, retired as a Major-General and devoted his latter days to hunting. Had I gone to India in 1912 the whole of my subsequent career might have been different; still, I should have missed a good many things which I should have been very sorry to miss, and the wise man accepts the fortune of war when he cannot alter it, "*quidquid corrigere est nefas*".

The year 1912 saw the foundation of the British School at Rome. Some such institution on the lines of the French School at the Villa Medici had long been discussed among architects, and I find that I had already called the attention of the Academy to the proposed school, and suggested that it should take a leading part in its organization. The Academy was not interested, but the Institute was, and in 1909 Mr. John Simpson<sup>1</sup> went out to Rome and drew up a report and a scheme for a school, based on the organization of the French School at the Villa Medici. This scheme was submitted to a Committee of the R.I.B.A., but as Aston Webb wrote to me in January 1910, in a letter I have already quoted, "We all blessed his (Simpson's) scheme, to cost a trifle of £100,000, but did not get much forrader". There was nobody ready with £100,000 and the scheme fell through, but soon afterwards the *deus ex machina* appeared in the shape of the Commission of the 1851 Exhibition. In the summer of 1910 the late Lord Esher was anxious to extend the Commission's scheme of

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir John Simpson, P.P.R.I.B.A.



scholarships to the Fine Arts. Evelyn Shaw, the secretary to the 1851 Commission, consulted Kenyon, Heath, E. K. Chambers of the Board of Education, Webb, Brock, Frampton and Abbey, and drew up a scheme for the Commission in the autumn of 1910. This scheme came up for discussion in the spring of 1911, between the representatives of the Commission, Webb, Brock and Abbey, and an important meeting of the Board of Management of the Commission was held on May 3, 1911, when the sub-Committee was authorized to bring these proposals before the Royal Academy, the R.I.B.A. and the Royal Society of Sculptors, and to enter into negotiations for a building. It was at this meeting that I appeared on the scene. Webb had feared opposition from Leonard Stokes, then President of the Institute, who had never cared for the scheme, and at Webb's suggestion I was added to the Committee. Evelyn Shaw writes to me:

From the time that we established the Organizing Committee of the School in May 1911, you took an active part in everything, including the preparation of the Constitution of the School, the tiresome building negotiations and finally as a past member of the Council and Executive Committee, and as the first Chairman of the Faculty of Architecture you became a leading figure in the administration of the School.

The pamphlet on the intention of the School and the syllabus that I drafted just twenty years ago remains in use to this day, with only minor alterations in detail.

The immediate difficulty was to find a building for the school, and here again the solution seemed to drop out of the skies. Lutyens had designed the British Pavilion in the great Italian Exhibition, and in April 1911 Rennell Rodd, our Ambassador, wrote to Lutyens that the Italians liked his building so much, and were so enthusiastic about what England had done, that the Syndic was ready to present the land on which the Pavilion stood, on condition that the façade should be rebuilt in permanent materials. The façade, by the way, was a reproduction of the upper storey of St. Paul's Cathedral, a somewhat unusual treatment for

an Exhibition Pavilion, and the subsequent rebuilding of this in stone proved to be a costly affair. Still, it was too good an offer to refuse, and at the meeting in May 1911, the Commission gallantly accepted the offer and undertook to buy the existing building and to bear the cost of altering and adapting it, as necessary, for its use as a hostel. Lutyens prepared the designs and generously made no charge for his work.

After a good deal of discussion, a meeting of the Organizing Committee was held on December 12, 1911,<sup>1</sup> at which the composition of the Council, the Executive Committee and the Faculties of the Arts were settled, and finally on June 22, 1912, a Royal Charter was granted and the Council was authorized to start the school.

The first Executive Committee consisted of fifteen members, with Lord Esher as Chairman.<sup>2</sup> The first competition was held in 1913 and the successful students were H. C. Bradshaw (Architecture), Gilbert Ledward (Sculpture) and Colin Gill (Painting), on the whole the three best scholars in any one year of the School at Rome Competitions. The *Morning Post* of the day devoted a column and a

<sup>1</sup> This meeting was attended by Sir E. Poynter, Sir Aston Webb and Mr. Clausen on behalf of the Academy, by Mr. Simpson and myself on behalf of the R.I.B.A., by Sir Thomas Brock and Mr. Sterling Lee on behalf of the R.S.B.C., by Professor Reid on behalf of the existing British School at Rome, and John Sargent. A full account of the provisions of the Royal Charter of the school and the names of the members of the Council and Executive Committee was given in *The Times* of April 17, 1912.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Esher (Chairman)

Lord Plymouth

Lord Redesdale

The Rt. Hon. Lewis Harcourt

Sir Charles Holroyd

Frederic George Kenyon

Sir Edward Poynter

John Sargent

Sir George Frampton

Sir Thomas Brock

Sir Aston Webb

Reginald Blomfield

James Smith Reid

Arthur Hamilton Smith

John Baker Penoyre

The first Faculty of Architecture consisted of:

Reginald Blomfield (Chairman)

W. R. Lethaby

F. L. Lutyens

Sir R. Lorimer

Ernest Newton

C. K. Reilly

J. W. Simpson

Leonard Stokes

Sir Aston Webb

half to an account of the School at Rome and the successful students, and from this excellent start the School has moved steadily forward to the position that it now holds as an outpost against the crack-brained aberrations of post-war "art" in architecture, painting and sculpture.

The men to whom the School at Rome is most indebted for its existence were the late Lord Esher, Aston Webb, Brock, Abbey and that most untiring and devoted of secretaries, Evelyn Shaw, who perhaps more than anyone has kept together the threads of a rather complicated organization, and has helped to guide the School through the shoals and quicksands which were certain to lie in wait for such an enterprise. Abbey dropped out of any active part in the proceedings, but he never lost his interest in the School and left it a handsome legacy. Brock was a strong supporter of the School in his own way. I knew him well and always liked him, a well-made, vigorous man with a bright blue eye and a cheerful countenance, and a fine artist who whirled into a discussion, not always with a complete grasp of the subject, but always with an enthusiasm that carried him far. He was the very opposite of Aston Webb. Webb had supported the idea of the School at Rome from the first, and long before the actual start was made in 1911. He was a skilful negotiator, shrewd, clear-headed and prudent, always careful of his ground before he moved, a man of affairs whose views commanded respect even if one did not always agree with them. Esher had a high opinion of his sagacity; indeed, in the early meetings of the Council he was rather inclined to listen to Webb and to nobody else, and it took me some time to convince Esher that I also had opinions, and did not intend to have them ignored.

Lord Esher was an excellent chairman, quick-witted and observant, masterful, a man with a keen eye for the essential point, who could not suffer fools gladly, and hated wasting time. He was rather formidable till one got used to his abrupt manner. I recollect on one occasion when I had called attention to some failure in

our scheme, that he turned on me sharply and said, "Well, what do you propose to do?" I suppose there was something in his manner that irritated me, for I replied, with equal bluntness, that I could not produce a reform out of my hat like a conjuror, and that it was for the Council to consider what was to be done. After that, and having got the length of each other's foot, we always worked together most amiably. The British School at Rome owes more to the late Lord Esher than to any single person. It could not have come into existence had it not been for the Commissioners of the 1851 Exhibition, and the Commissioners would not have accepted this considerable responsibility had they not been persuaded to do so by Lord Esher.

In 1912 I was elected President of the Royal Institute of British Architects in succession to Leonard Stokes. Two years before I had been nominated for election, and only heard at half-past one on the day of the election that Stokes was in the field against me. My friends in the provinces were as innocent as I was, and under the impression that I was the only candidate did not come up to vote, and Leonard Stokes was elected. I had known Stokes since the old days of the Academy Schools nearly thirty years before. He was from first to last an Institute man pure and simple. He never joined the Secessionists in the nineties, and I think he regarded us with some suspicion as mere artists; he had no use for Oxford or Cambridge men in "the profession", and I am not sure that he welcomed us back into the Institute. On the other hand, he was a very able architect with a somewhat grim sense of humour; he was uncertain in temper and quite uncompromising in manner, but I think this was largely explained by failing health. During his term of office he devoted himself to the attempt to amalgamate the Society of Architects with the Institute; but he failed, and when I came into office in 1912 I found his programme in ruins. Indeed, his health had broken down in 1911, and as senior Vice-President I had to carry on as acting President from January 1912 till July, when I became President in fact.

It is the custom at the Institute for a portrait of the outgoing President to be painted by some well-known artist. Stokes was painted by Orpen, then a brilliant young artist, and Orpen painted him in a fawn-coloured Jaeger dressing-gown and a light blue tie. The Council of the R.I.B.A. were scandalized, and I was desired to write to Orpen and suggest some alteration. I accordingly wrote to Orpen, a letter marked "Private", to explain that greatly as we admired his picture as a work of art, we found it rather difficult to place it among the more or less ceremonial portraits of our Past-Presidents, "gentlemen of position and dignity". Orpen's reply was characteristic:

*Not in the least Private.*

KILDARE STREET, DUBLIN,

July 15, 1912.

DEAR SIR---I am very glad my portrait of Mr. Stokes does not match the others in the room. It was not my intention that it should, as I think the portraits there want waking up a bit. Mr. Stokes is also not at all the character to dress up in a Frock coat with medals, etc. If his personality is strong, why not be proud of it, and let it stand out as different to the others? I am myself pleased with the picture and have not the slightest idea of altering it. Of course I shall be only too pleased to take it back if it is not liked. It is worth more money in the open market than I am going to get for it from your Council. You speak of conditions. I was given none. I was asked by the late Sir Alma-Tadema to do something for the money, and instead of doing the ordinary stock portrait which your Council would have liked I took a lot of trouble to do something really good for you, and this is the thanks I receive.

Let me know and I will remove the portrait; but please no more lessons in portrait painting.

Orpen's last paragraph a little reminds me of Gainsborough's famous letter to the Council of the R.A., which terminates: "This he swears by God". Orpen added a charming little postscript:

Please do not take the above letter as personal. Your letter was really most kind and I thank you for it. The above is for the Council.

I sympathized with Orpen as an artist, yet if the plea of strong personality was enough to justify the dressing-gown, it might equally have justified a portrait of the President in his bath. The picture did, in fact, show a lack of appreciation of *quid sit ordo, quid sit quod deceat*, but Orpen would have snapped his fingers at Cicero, and the little man could never wholly divest himself of his instinct for the grotesque and even for the caricature of his subjects.

## CHAPTER XV

The R.I.B.A. and Registration—Address of 1912—Policy of a New Charter—Carried June 1914—The Completion of the Mall—The Gold Medal—Address of 1913—Exhibition in the Jeu de Paume, 1914, and the Legion of Honour.

WHEN I became President of the R.I.B.A. in 1912, the problem that exercised all architects who were connected with that body was the thorny question of Registration. In an earlier chapter I have described how some of us left the Institute in 1891, sooner than agree to the Registration of Architects, but the pressure from the provinces was assiduous and ever increasing in urgency, and in 1904-5 the Institute definitely decided to "promote legislation for the statutory registration of architects",<sup>1</sup> a policy inspired by Aston Webb, E. T. Hall, John Slater, Leonard Stokes and H. T. Hare, who were convinced that as registration of architects in some form was inevitable, the Institute as the representative body must place itself at the head of the movement. They realized at the same time that Parliament would never give the control of Registration to the Institute having regard to its numbers at the time, and that therefore the area represented by the Institute must be enlarged. They accordingly proposed to form a new class of members called Licentiates, and endeavoured to come to terms with the Society of Architects, which had established itself as a rival body, with the express object of securing the registration of architects. A new Charter was obtained in 1909 which created the new class of Licentiates, and over 2200 unattached architects joined this class,

<sup>1</sup> For much of the information contained in this chapter I am indebted to Mr. Ian Macalister, the Secretary of the R.I.B.A.

but the attempts made under Stokes' presidency to amalgamate the Society of Architects failed in 1911-12, and I think it was the worry and vexation of the negotiations that affected his health at the end of 1911. He had not spared himself, and the *Building News* of November 1912 said of him that he

had done more to increase the prestige of the Institute, to enlarge its membership and to familiarize the general public with its right and duty to intervene, when matters of public interest warranted interference, than most of his predecessors.

The praise was deserved, but no sort of settlement had been reached, and I entered office with this problem of Registration in the forefront of the battle, and there was a good deal of speculation as to what I should make of it. The Building papers were kindly. The *Architectural Review* in December 1912 was good enough to say:

Rarely has the R.I.B.A. had the good fortune to secure a man who combines such singularly wide attainments in arts and letters with so picturesque and powerful a personality as that of its new President, and it is fortunate indeed for the Institute that Professor<sup>1</sup> Blomfield should occupy the chair at this exact moment of its history; no other man at the present day sums up so well in his own person our ideal of the complete architect. . . . Under his guidance Registration may well mean in the end an incalculable gain to the art of architecture.

I did, in fact, with the help of my colleagues at the Institute, hammer out a scheme and got it passed by the Institute at one of the largest meetings of that body on record, but the war knocked everything on the head, and the whole business had to begin again after the war.

My opening address in November 1912 was well received. *The Builder* called it "eminently weighty and balanced", and *The Surveyor, Municipal and County Engineer*, speaking of Registration said that I had "made it clear that the object of Registration is not to create a monopoly regardless of the

<sup>1</sup> I was not, in fact, Professor of Architecture at the Royal Academy, having resigned that office in 1910.



professional competence of those who are enrolled", and that its "primary reason" was "to put a stop to incompetence and to establish and maintain a reasonable level of accomplishment, and to see that that level is reached by those who undertake the very responsible work of an architect". This, in fact, stated the only real justification of registration. Some of us have always disliked it, and I have already described the strong and, for some years, successful stand made against it twenty years before, under the leadership of Shaw and Jackson, but the pressure from the provinces, reinforced by many of the London members of the Institute, was irresistible, and the real issue was how could Registration be established with a minimum of injury to the art of architecture, and be made a real test of competence in the technique of architects. I pointed out in my address of 1912 that

architects should not forget that the only effective passport to the appreciation of the public is the merit of their own personal work, and that if the profession of Architecture is to receive a higher recognition in the State than it obtains at present, it can only do so by insuring a high standard of education and attainment among its individual members. . . . Registration should be really and effectually the hall-mark of Professional competence.

I reminded my audience that "there is a real danger, in all this whirl of architectural politics, of our forgetting that first of all we are artists". I regret to have to think that in negotiations after the war this essential point fell into the background, but before the war the Board of Architectural Education of the Institute, under the skilful guidance of Aston Webb as first Chairman, followed by myself, had done useful work in reorganizing architectural training, and this ideal of artistic competence had the full sympathy of the Council of the Institute.

A Registration Committee had been appointed in 1912, and in December 1913<sup>1</sup> the Council of the Institute pro-

<sup>1</sup> See R.I.B.A. *Journal*, December 1913.

duced a full report and recommendations for the Registration of Architects. The Council reported that the chances of obtaining Statutory Registration were extremely remote, and further that under the existing Charter and Bylaws there were serious constitutional difficulties in the way. Under the circumstances the Council recommended that application should be made to the Privy Council for a new Charter which would at the same time

obtain for duly qualified architects a public recognition of their qualifications,<sup>1</sup> give them substantial benefits which cannot be obtained at present by any other means, and remove the existing obstacles in the way of any future Parliamentary action.

In introducing the report to a general meeting of the Institute, I said that personally I was in favour of the policy proposed, because I was "convinced by the logic of facts, whatever we may have thought twenty years ago, that some organization of our calling is necessary". The meeting was adjourned till January 5, 1914, and Aston Webb opened it with a very able speech in which he pointed out that a Registration Bill had no sort of chance of getting through Parliament, and that the policy of applying for a new Charter would keep the control of Architects' qualifications and their training in the hands of the Institute, the only qualified body. The whole question before the Institute was whether it should proceed by Charter, that is, by applying to the Privy Council, or by a Registration Bill put forward in Parliament, and Webb moved that a petition should be presented to the King praying for a new Charter which would "enable the R.I.B.A. to register and distinguish persons qualified to practise". This was seconded by Mr. Elkington and carried unanimously in a meeting at which 180 members were present. Webb's prestige and authority, and also his skilful and good-tempered address, undoubtedly carried the day.

<sup>1</sup> Architects approved by the Council of the R.I.B.A. were to have exclusive right to call themselves "Chartered Architects".

Mr. Topley, who had fought the proposal strongly, admitted his defeat and said that, having been beaten, he should vote for the resolution, and I see that as President I said, "Mr. Topley, allow me to congratulate you on that speech, and to congratulate you also on the very able way in which you have handled your points. I think it is a very sportsmanlike way of taking a beating."

The next meeting was held in April 1914, and at this meeting the proposals of the Council for a new Charter were laid before the general assembly. In opening the debate I pointed out that the Council had confined itself to putting the broad issues before members, and I therefore deprecated verbal criticisms. The report was moved clause by clause by Stanley Peach, a well-known architect with an unusually clear head. The report contained thirteen clauses, and after a long discussion (the report occupies nine closely printed pages of the *Institute Journal*) seven clauses were passed, and the meeting was adjourned.

Aston Webb, Ernest Newton, E. P. Warren, George Hubbard, Paul Waterhouse, J. A. Gotch, William Woodward and others supported the Council. The amendments, most of which were lost, were moved by Mr. Perks, Mr. Herbert Welch and Mr. Douglas Topley, and supported by Mr. Maurice B. Adams and others. My business as President was to hold the ropes, and keep the various speakers inside them; and, looking at the report, I am surprised to see how well I succeeded in doing so.

The adjourned meeting was held on June 8, 1914. Peach, seconded by Hubbard, continued to move the resolutions beginning with Clause 8. Mr. Topley and Mr. Cubitt fought the clauses inch by inch, and I had to say what was an amendment and what was not. Clause 8 was referred back to the Council after a spirited discussion in which everybody kept their temper, and as we spent the whole evening in discussing one clause and this was referred back to the Council, I am surprised to find that I kept mine. One gentleman suggested that the Council had only devoted five minutes to an important clause, but I was able

to assure him that the Committee of the Council had given it "most careful consideration for several days".

The sixth and last meeting was held on June 29, 1914. Mr. Perks moved that Clause 10 be referred back to the Council, but was heavily defeated. I had to put my foot down heavily on some irrelevance, and asked if there were any further amendments to the Council's proposal. One was made but defeated. Clause 10 was passed carrying with it Clauses 8 and 9, and after one more struggle the remaining clauses were carried, and it was finally moved and carried that the Institute solicitors be instructed to prepare the necessary petition for submission to the Privy Council. So ended the discussion. Over 260 members attended this meeting, the largest number, I believe, that had ever assembled at 9 Conduit Street, and I felt really proud of myself and of my colleagues who had fought with me and won this remarkable victory in the face of a resolute and closely organized opposition. In their final form the Council's proposals were drafted mainly by Stanley Peach and me, with the assistance of Ian Macalister, the devoted Secretary of the Institute, and between us all we had succeeded in rescuing the Institute from the impasse of 1911 and in arriving at a definite solution of a problem which had troubled that body for a quarter of a century.

The main purport of the scheme was to obtain a fresh Charter enabling the Institute to register as architects (*a*) persons who could show that they possessed certain qualifications, (*b*) persons who had passed certain prescribed tests. All such persons could call themselves Registered architects, but only members of the Institute could call themselves Chartered architects, and the Register was to be administered by a Standing Committee of the Institute. So far we seemed to have come to a definite settlement, but the war came in August 1914, and when the question was reopened, in 1919, conditions had altered. A large majority of members wished for amalgamation with the Society of Architects, and for a Registration Bill on the old lines—a return to, but also a partial reversal of, the settle-

ment of 1914. A new Charter, the enfranchisement of all classes of members and their representation on the Council of the Institute were obtained in 1925, and these were carried on from 1914, but by the Bill for Statutory Registration passed in 1931, the Institute is no longer the sole controlling body of Registration, and many persons are enabled to register as architects whose admission would not have been entertained for an instant under the old scheme. Before the war Aston Webb and I and most of the leading men in the Institute would certainly have opposed any such provisions as lowering the prestige of the Institute and degrading the profession of architects. However, things have moved so fast since the war and in consequence of it, that I suppose a settlement of some sort was absolutely necessary, and we must now make the best of it. My term of office as President ended the night after this famous meeting. I had occupied the chair for some two years and a half, and was desired by the Council to carry on for a third year, two years being the usual term of office. At first I consented to do so, but the very troublesome business of the Institute in 1912-14 was breaking me down as it had broken down the health of my predecessor, Leonard Stokes. I had to withdraw my consent to serve another year, and was succeeded by my old friend Ernest Newton, who carried on as President through the war.

In addition to all this Registration business, I had, as President of the R.I.B.A., to serve on various Committees, such as the Committee for the completion of the Quadrant, and the Committee dealing with the approach to the Admiralty Arch from the east side, which had been left anyhow. The Committee for the Admiralty Arch consisted of Lord Plymouth, Lionel Earle and myself, representing the Government; Cyril Cobb, Lord Peel and Andrew Taylor (now Sir Andrew), representing the L.C.C.; and Mr. Lyon Thomas (Mayor), Mr. Somers Cocks (ex-Mayor) and Mr. Davis, representing the Westminster C.C. The point at issue was how far it was possible to complete Webb's design on the east side, and the real

obstacle was Drummond's Bank and the fact that nobody cared to shoulder the cost of completing the scheme.

In March 1913 an appeal was published in *The Times* signed by Poynter as President of the Royal Academy, Lord Plymouth as President of the London Society and myself as President of the R.I.B.A., urging the authorities to arrange for the completion of this great public improvement by a suitable entrance from Trafalgar Square. "The Mall Muddle" was becoming notorious, and one of the suggestions made for dealing with the unsightly gap on the Trafalgar Square side had been to build another arch next Trafalgar Square—a scheme which would have been very costly and have involved great alterations in Drummond's Bank. Mr. Drummond wrote a letter to *The Times* stating the position so far as he was concerned, and I recollect an amusing, if somewhat tempestuous, interview with the Mr. Drummond of that time at the Office of Works. Mr. Drummond, who was a rather fiery old gentleman, gave it as his opinion that architects were a rotten lot; he evidently thought that architects, like doctors, in the immortal words of Captain Billy Bones, "is all swabs", and he, not unnaturally, declined to entertain any alterations in his bank, which had been built at a very considerable cost from Aitchison's designs. I sympathized with his point of view, and instead of altering the bank to carry out Webb's original design, it was decided to acquire the buildings on the opposite side of the road, the Government to contribute one-third of the cost, and to make the design of the new buildings to be erected on the north side conform as nearly as possible to the design of Drummond's buildings. This was done, and I put the design of the new buildings into shape without charging for the work, one of the many works that I have done for Government without any recognition, in accordance with the usual custom of British Governments.

In 1913, on the recommendation of the Council, I was awarded the Royal Gold Medal of the R.I.B.A. This Medal is awarded annually to an Architect in recognition of ser-

vices to Architecture. Every third year it is awarded to a foreign architect, and a list of the recipients, many of them men of great distinction, is set up on the walls of the Institute premises, 9 Conduit Street. The interest of the Gold Medal is that it is awarded to an architect by his colleagues. The *Architects' Journal* said: "There is no one in the profession to-day who by his personality, his boundless energy, his books and his buildings sums up so well the objects for which the Medal was founded". Lord Plymouth, who invested me with the Medal, was good enough to say that "It had been his good fortune to be associated rather closely with Mr. Blomfield on more than one occasion lately. He had learnt to appreciate his breadth of view, his knowledge, his wide sympathies and the very high position which he maintained as the representative of the great profession of Architecture in England." Lord Plymouth, who was a charming and very kindly man, said a number of other pleasant things, and then proceeded to tie the blue riband of the Medal on my neck so badly that it stuck out as a great knot on the back of my neck. However, the Secretary patted it down, I resumed the Chair, and addressed the meeting on some of the famous men who had been awarded the Gold Medal in the past.

About this time I had a controversy with Mr. March Phillips in the *Morning Post*. Mr. Phillips had enlarged with more eloquence than knowledge on the "workman's" theory of architecture, on the idea that the real way to attain great and noble architecture was to leave it all to the workmen and deposit the architect in the nearest dust-cart. Of course such a theory was against all facts and all knowledge, but the British public is always liable to be led astray by one form of sentimentality or another, and I thought it necessary to deal with this mischievous fallacy in my opening address in November 1913. I took as my title "The Outlook of Architecture", and said: "Where our critics go wrong is in demanding a new language when they ought to be demanding new ideas. The old language will do very well if we are masters of it

and have the brains to use it." *The Builder*, edited by Statham, was much pleased, and in its editorial said: "We think that a better address and one more apposite to the times has never been delivered by a President of the Royal Institute, and we consider that the Institute is fortunate in every way in its President".

In May 1914 an exhibition of British Architecture was held in the Jeu de Paume in Paris, and opened by M. Jacquier, Under-Secretary of State for Fine Arts. All the leading English architects contributed, and in the evening of the opening day we were entertained at a grand banquet in the Salons of the Palais d'Orsay. The chair was taken by René Viviani, Minister of Fine Arts. M. Hermant, President of the Société des Architectes Diplômés, welcomed the visitors. I had to reply, and endeavoured to point out the difference between French and English art. "Yours", I said, "is the art of the big battalions, disciplined, organized, guided by numerous traditions, marching with steady tramp towards great and recognized ideals. . . . The Englishman's method is peculiar to himself. He saunters along and follows up what takes his fancy . . . and this individualism is in the very blood of our race." In view of the New Architecture which France has taken to its heart, the art of the big battalions has disappeared into space and the glory of French art is lost.

After the banquet and the speeches, Newton, Gotch and I were leaving, but were told that the culminating point in our entertainment was yet to come---we were placed in the front seats of a concert room full of our hosts the architects, and after waiting some little time not knowing what was to come, were presented with the spectacle of a shapely young girl without a particle of clothing performing a *danse antique*. If somewhat unusual, this was no doubt intended as a compliment to what claimed to be a "learned profession". The French Government would have presented me with the Legion of Honour but were unable to do so, because our Foreign Office withheld their consent, in view of an ordinance passed three years before pre-



cluding the acceptance of foreign orders by British subjects. I should like to have had the Legion of Honour, not only on account of its historical interest, but also because it is very useful when travelling in France. Next day I was interviewed by M. Mora, and this was his description in *La Liberté* of May 22, 1914: "Grand, droit, en dépit de la soixantaine" (I was fifty-eight in actual fact). "M. Blomfield parle avec une volubilité extraordinaire, coupant ses phrases de gestes nerveux et rapides et soulignant parfois ses mots de clignements d'yeux pleins de malice."

So ended my active connection with the R.I.B.A. At the end of the great meeting on June 29, 1914, a vote of thanks to me was proposed by Ernest Newton, and Aston Webb, in seconding it, said, "We have been proud of our President wherever he has been. We have been proud of him at the Institute, proud of him socially, proud of him at all the official meetings and functions that he has attended. He has always upheld the honour and dignity of the Institute." It was a handsome compliment, and I valued it the more because in all that I had done at the Institute Webb had always been my adviser and my loyal friend.

## CHAPTER XVI

R.A. 1914—The Academy Club—The Arts Club—The War—The Town Guard, Rye—The Inns of Court Volunteers—Trench Work—Conscientious Objectors—The Imperial War Graves Commission—The Cemeteries and the War Cross.

I was elected a Royal Academician in February 1914. In those days, before the reforms of 1918, there was no fixed ratio of numbers as between painters, sculptors and architects. The painters kept the Academy pretty well to themselves, and in 1914, before I was elected Academician, there were actually only two full Academician architects—Jackson and Webb. Aitchison had died a very old man in 1910. Belcher died in November 1913. I was the one and only Associate Architect, and had, not unnaturally, expected to be elected in succession to Aitchison, but an engraver was elected, and though it did not matter greatly, this delayed the initiation of those reforms in the Academy which I had hoped for and had in mind for many years. My election was very well received. *The Times* credited me with having “built up a large practice, particularly in the field of domestic architecture”, and honoured me with a leading article on “Styles in Architecture”. The *Morning Post* said: “Mr. Blomfield has had a brilliant career, winning great distinction in various spheres of activity”. *Country Life* congratulated me and said: “Mr. Blomfield has done great service to an art and profession which touch the public at many points”. The *Westminster Gazette* concluded its notice: “He is likewise the author of various books on architectural subjects which are not only valuable in the technical sense, but also make excellent reading, for a happy gift of expression and a keen sense of humour are

among the new R.A.'s other engaging characteristics". Among the technical papers the *Architects' Journal* had little doubt that my "vigorous personality would not be long in impressing itself on that slow-moving body, the Royal Academy", though in point of fact it was some two years before that impression was made to any purpose.

Quite the best part of such honours as have come to me has been the genuine congratulations of one's friends and colleagues, and before the war came to upset the world there existed among members of the Academy and their friends a very genial atmosphere. It is true that at one of the dinners of the Academy Club one member, a brilliant sculptor, who was sitting opposite to a well-known painter, remarked to him at intervals like a minute-gun, "... You are a blot on the Academy", but we attributed this to the normal exuberance of Chelsea, and I have kindly memories of the Academy Club dinners, at which Richard Jack used to sing to us with his fine bass voice, and we all used to lend a hand in helping the chairmen out with their efforts to propose the toasts of the evening. At one of these dinners Clausen told me the ingenuous remark of one of his models. He was explaining to her that one's arms and legs and so on have their definite part to play in the balance of the figure. Pointing to that part which the lamented M. Pellissier used to describe as the part of the figure "where we tore what we wore, where we wear" Clausen asked the girl, "and what do you suppose is the purpose of this?" "Oh," said the girl, "I suppose that is given us for ornament." Among my papers I came across this card, dated May 4, 1915, from George Frampton:

MY DEAR R.B.—Just to offer you my sincere thanks for one of the most enjoyable evenings I have ever spent with the Club, and I send you my heartiest congratulations on the splendid way you carried the evening, which could easily have been a dull one. My guests were delighted.

The dinner must have been the annual Academy Club dinner held on the first Monday in May after the Academy

Banquet. It is always largely attended and I must have been in the chair.

At this time I was Chairman of the Arts Club. I had succeeded Luke Fildes, and everything went well until an unpleasant episode occurred in 1915. A member of the Club belonging to a firm closely connected with the German Metallgesellschaft, had brought an action to recover damages for the confiscation by the Admiralty of a ship named the *Bilbster* with her cargo of 6710 tons of spelter destined for the use of the German Company. Sir Samuel Evans, the President of the Prize Court before whom the case was tried, said in his judgement that "Messrs. M—— and Co. did not hesitate to engage in commercial intercourse with the enemies of this country in their desire to get the goods for this enemy firm", and he disallowed their claim. I knew nothing about the affair, but my attention was called to it, together with a bundle of newspaper cuttings, by the acting Hon. Secretary of the Club, and we agreed that a meeting of the Committee must be called. At this meeting I confined myself to reading a statement of the case and the summing up by the Judge as reported in the papers, and urged that in the interests of the Club an enquiry should be made into the circumstances of the case. I put it to the Committee: "Is there or is there not a *prima facie* case for enquiry by the Committee, in spite of the verdicts of the Courts and the fact that the plaintiffs did not appeal?" I could hardly have stated the case more plainly and with less exaggeration, especially as this was in 1915, when things were going badly for us in the war. Both my sons were serving, the eldest in India, the younger in his territorial regiment on the Ypres front. I myself was working with the Inns of Court Volunteers and many of us were in a state of high nervous tension, resentful of anything that looked like treason to the country, and I pointed out that any suspicion of this sort in regard to a member, in fairness both to him and brother members of the Club, should be cleared away if he was to continue to be a member of the Club.

Greatly to my surprise I did not find a single member of the Committee ready to support me, and having concluded the business of the evening, I announced from the chair that I resigned the Chairmanship and my membership of the Club. I then left the building and have never entered it since.

There ensued a long correspondence in which I was urged to reconsider my decision. I replied that I would very gladly do so, if a Committee was appointed to go into the whole matter, that I would not take part in the enquiry myself, and would abide by whatever decision the Committee arrived at. The Club Committee would not agree to this, and I declined to reconsider my decision. I left the Arts Club with genuine regret. Up to that date I had had no difficulties as Chairman. I had and have many friends in the Club, excellent good fellows with whom I was really sorry to part company. Yet, looking back on this episode, I am clear that if the same circumstances were repeated to-day I should take the same action as that which I took in 1915. George Frampton, an ardent patriot, wrote to me on November 18, 1915:

MY DEAR OLD CHAP—Your action is just what I should expect from you, and I am proud of you and I thank you most sincerely for letting me know. It is extremely difficult for me sometimes to understand my fellow-countrymen. I hardly know whether it is a want of backbone or an over-sense of justice.

There is, perhaps, in these words, "an over-sense of justice", an explanation of the action of the Committee. They probably felt bound to protect a member of the Club. For myself I admit that my mind was at the Front, and I was thinking of the men who stood up against the shells that would have been made from the metals on the *Bilbster* and *Manningtry*.

I have never forgotten those early days of August 1914. Nobody knew whether the Liberal Government would have the courage of its opinions and declare for war, and I well recollect the relief of everyone in our part of the

world when they put their foot down and said they would honour their treaties. We were at Point Hill at the time, and I went over at once to Dover to arrange about my younger son Austin,<sup>1</sup> who had just finished his four years at Oxford, joining our local Territorials, the 5th Sussex, then stationed at Dover. Having arranged this with Langham, the Colonel, whom I had once defeated in a lawn-tennis tournament at Rye thirty years before, I returned to Rye, and feeling, as we all did, the necessity of doing something, I organized a guard for the railway bridge which crosses the Rother just below my house. We took turns in guarding the bridge at night, but nothing happened except that on the first night I trod on a dead sheep left by the tide under the bridge, and on another occasion Montmorency, the old Oxford cricket blue and plus-four golfer, was nearly attacked by patriotic fishermen, who met him returning to Camber in the early hours of the morning and thought he was a spy.

As things settled down, we soon disappeared to our allotted work in the service of the country, and I joined up to the Inns of Court Reserve Corps of Volunteers well over military age, which was being formed in connection with the Inns of Court. Moore, now a police magistrate, was our Major. His brother, affectionately known as "Granny", became our Instructor in bayonet-fighting, and later on I was associated with him as an Instructor in this vigorous exercise, after a course of lessons at Knightsbridge Barracks given by an enormous Sergeant. We drilled in the Temple Gardens assiduously. Barron of the *Evening News* was my platoon Commander, and I was promoted to Sergeant, but could never master the words of command; indeed, on one occasion the platoon responded nobly to my order, and were marching straight into a brick wall, when I saved the situation by yelling "about turn". I recollect an inspection

<sup>1</sup> He served the first two years with the 5th Sussex, transferred to the R.A.F. and served the last two years as a bomber in the Flying Force on the Western Front, crashed six weeks before the Armistice, but was saved by falling through a tree. He is now married and in practice as an architect.

of our battalion by some old General in Richmond Park, and, as luck would have it, I was ordered to take out my platoon. We started off in good order, but I had to rely on the Corporal beside me for the words of command. We stumped about in great style; the elderly and breathless privates behind me were whispering, "Sergeant, for God's sake go a bit easier", and finally I was allowed to march off my men, the General expressing himself well satisfied, except that I had marched them off in file instead of in fours.

Owen Seaman, brusque and vigorous, commanded a platoon; so did Tomlin,<sup>1</sup> who would have made an excellent officer, for he was never at a loss for the word of command, right or wrong, and his cheerful countenance and quick, alert carriage encouraged many a weary veteran to carry on. The battalion included many other legal luminaries, four of whom have since become judges—Lord Russell of Killowen, Romer, Luxmoore and Roche, all men who carried themselves well for their years. As the war went on we were told off to dig trenches round London, and we made some excellent trenches at Woldingham, on the high ground above Limpsfield, near Epping, and elsewhere, and as I was supposed to understand digging, being an architect, I was placed in charge of the work and given a Commission. This enabled me to get back on the platoon officers, who had stamped on my efforts as a Sergeant, and I made them work with the best of them. Indeed, I was falsely accused of an unusual flow of language when engaged in trench work, and on one occasion when I hit my thumb with the hammer instead of the nail, and enlarged on the occurrence in appropriate terms, Laurence Binyon, who was working with me, looked at me gravely and said, "You quite frighten me with your language". I said I was sorry, but hard work always made me swear. It had been the same when I was a trooper in the Mounted Infantry, and it was all part of the game. In all that we did, drills, marches or trench work, the pre-

<sup>1</sup> Now Lord Tomlin, Judge of the High Court.

vailing note was one of good companionship. Atkins (Private J. B.) wrote an excellent poem, "A Happy Day at Woldingham", from which I quote two verses—XI and XII:

And yet I had a cheery time, trust Reggie B—— for that.  
So long as he is guiding things, then things will not fall flat.  
His voice still mingles with my dreams, I hear it still with joy:  
"Where's that damned fellow got to now?" "Oh, there you are,  
dear boy."

The voice goes on, "Look here, dear boy, when you've smoothed  
off those curves,  
I wish you'd just bring up this way about a ton of turves.  
You've done all that? You have done well. You say the thing  
looks queer?  
Of course it does—that's not your fault; it's that b——  
engineer."

Early in 1918 I became one of the Principal Architects of the Imperial War Graves Commission and I had to leave the battalion, much to my regret, and I think to theirs. Tomlin wrote to me that "the Sunday marches and digging would be devilish dull without me". The fact is that I always liked hard manual labour and the company of men engaged on it. In January 1920 I received a communication from the War Office to the effect that, in recognition of my services as an officer in the 2nd Battalion County of London Volunteer Regiment, I was granted "the Honorary Rank of Lieutenant". Good old War Office, always trying to do its best.

In 1917 I received from Mrs. Hobhouse a pamphlet entitled *I appeal unto Caesar*, in which that lady defended the position of the conscientious objector, and quoted in support of her arguments Professor Gilbert Murray, who had referred to the conduct of the Early Christians and the Quakers in the time of Charles II as precedents and models for the conscientious objector. I pointed out in reply that her argument was fallacious, as it ignored the total difference of conditions, and that when the Early Christians or



Quakers were called upon to perform a ceremonial act to which they objected, the State was not in danger, nobody was concerned except the Quakers and the Early Christians, and they were not only justified but bound to act according to their conviction.

But in this war it is the obvious fact, and has been throughout, that the State is in extreme danger, and that unless we win the war, all the ideals of freedom and civilization, all that Englishmen have died and fought for from time immemorial, will be lost. . . . To assume that our private convictions are unassailable is to assume infallibility, and there is a higher morality than this egotistical "honesty", and that is complete self-sacrifice in the interest of others.

*Salus populi suprema lex.* There were, no doubt, honest conscientious objectors who felt themselves debarred from taking life under any conditions, but they could, as many did, "do their part as good and patriotic men in ambulance work at the front or as mine-sweepers, or in any work that helps to save life, not to take it". In point of fact the majority of conscientious objectors objected to military service because they were out to save themselves from any kind of danger.

The Imperial War Graves Commission was established by Royal Charter in 1917. It began in a very modest way, and indeed its origin was largely due to one incident in the autumn of 1914. A joint Committee of the British Red Cross and the Order of St. John had been formed, and in the second month of the war Kitchener requested this Committee to search for missing men on the line of the retreat from Mons to the Marne. In October 1914 a small group of British graves marked with wooden crosses was found in the French communal cemetery at Bethune, but it appeared that nobody knew anything about it or was responsible for its care. The Red Cross Committee thereupon decided to form a Unit to mark and register all British graves that could be found, and from these informal beginnings was developed the great organization of the Im-

perial War Graves Commission, dealing with the cemeteries and memorials of all soldiers of the British Empire killed in the war. The first official meeting of the Commission was held in November 1917,<sup>1</sup> when Sir Frederic Kenyon, Chief Librarian of the British Museum, was appointed "adviser" to the Commission "in regard to the architectural treatment and lay-out of cemeteries". The Commission had the usual English distrust of experts, for Kenyon, though a fine scholar and a very distinguished man, was not an architect, or familiar with that art, and of course we did not fail to shoot our cheerful gibes at "the art adviser". But Kenyon did invaluable work. He at once visited some cemeteries in France, and in January 1918 made a very able report to the Commission, in which he laid down the broad lines of treatment for the cemeteries, and made suggestions as to organization.

In the main his recommendations were followed, except in two important particulars—the Battle memorials and the War Cross. Kenyon seems to have thought that the memorials must take the form of sculpture, and in his report hoped that our sculptors would have the chance of showing that "the art of this country could hold its own with that of the countries on whose soil the monuments will stand". This it might easily do, when one thinks of the poilus in various attitudes, winged angels and Gallic cocks scattered about in France; but the Commission wisely did not adopt this advice, and with the exception of one terrible memorial, in which the soldiers resemble the figures that children make with corks, the memorials have been few in number, important in scale and of severe architectural design. In regard to the Cross which was to be set up in every cemetery, Kenyon had suggested that it should follow the type of Cross sometimes still found in English country churchyards, or should be a Celtic Cross; but the mediaeval Cross was too closely identified with its time and its purposes to be in the least suitable for a War

<sup>1</sup> A full account of the Commission and its work was given in the War Graves number of *The Times*, November 10, 1928.

Cross, and the Celtic Cross, popular as it is in versions of Aberdeen granite, is the last word in commonplace and uncouth design. In all other regards Kenyon's report was very valuable, for the Commission had no precedent for the work they had undertaken; moreover, so far as architectural design went, its members knew so little of the procedure of building that I had to explain to them the meaning of specifications and quantities, and the ordinary methods of obtaining tenders and drawing up building contracts. The establishment and work of the Imperial War Graves Commission have always seemed to me a unique achievement. It had all sorts of difficulties and even opposition to contend with, yet in spite of these obstacles the tact, tenacity and remarkable organizing ability of Fabian Ware built up a Department which has given the Empire, in our Military Cemeteries, a memorial of those lost in the war such as never had been dreamt of before, and which has been a model to other countries as to how these things should be done.

I was invited to become one of the three Principal Architects with Sir Edwin Lutyens and Sir Herbert Baker, and our work consisted in visiting the temporary burying-places of our men in the company of one of the Commission's staff on the spot, and arranging for these places being put into permanent form. The cemeteries were often very difficult to find, as in many cases the roads shown on our maps had been obliterated by shell fire, and we had to leave our cars and wander over what had been battle-fields in search of graves hastily made and planted anywhere.<sup>1</sup> There was also an excellent chance of the car getting bogged.

In March 1918 I was taken to Ypres by Colonel Messer, who was in charge of the War Graves staff at Hesdin. I was duly supplied with a tin hat and a gas mask, which I could not put on anyhow. Fortunately this was an off day

<sup>1</sup> In 1918-19 many of these battle-fields were just as they had been left after action, with trenches, duckboards, broken shells, fuses and rifles and helmets scattered about on the ground.

with the Germans and they were not shelling Ypres that day. On another frosty morning I was taken up to the Vimy Ridge. There were a number of aeroplanes flying about, and I heard something pattering on the hard ground round me, and was told this was due to anti-aircraft guns; so Major Braithwaite, my companion, and I took refuge in an old dug-out. Altogether one had an exciting time in 1918, down to the date of the Armistice.

The Principal Architects had areas assigned to them, and they prepared designs for the cemeteries in these areas on data supplied by the staff on the spot. The three cemeteries at Ypres, for example, the one on the rampart and the two near the old prison; the great cemetery of Lystenhoek near Poperinghe, and several of the more important cemeteries in the Ypres area and the Somme district, and the large and important cemetery of St. Sever at Rouen, were designed by me in this way. Part of the great cemetery at St. Sever is occupied by the French, and I had to meet the Mayor of Rouen to arrange the details. The Mayor was a fine soldierly man, and our heart-to-heart talk was so fervent that we nearly ended up on each other's necks in the true French manner. As far as I recollect, the cemetery at Le Tréport on the coast, which was designed by me, was actually the first cemetery that was completed. It was regarded by the Commission as in the nature of an experiment both as to cost and effect, and Kipling having said some nice things as to its beauty, this cemetery became more or less a prototype for subsequent designs. Some of the smaller cemeteries were entrusted to the staff who were stationed first at Hesdin and afterwards at St. Omer, subject to approval of the designs by the Principal Architect in whose district they lay.

The staff was composed of young architects and draughtsmen who had served in the war, and in September 1918 I drew up for their guidance a memorandum of the principles which should govern their designs. The memorandum was headed "Advice for the Use of the Junior Architects". The first clause said:

Two leading ideas should govern the design of the cemeteries: (a) the fit commemoration of those who have fallen in this tremendous war; (b) the abstract expression of the idea of sacrifice and heroic death for a great cause.

This was followed by fifteen clauses giving recommendations in detail. Above all, I urged simplicity of treatment. I find in a speech that I made in some big town in April 1920—I do not recollect where—I said:

The great War Cross has no ornament but the bronze sword of the fighting man. The great stone nothing but the words "Their name liveth for evermore", and such buildings as there are will be austere and simple. The cemeteries, carefully tended, will rely for their effect on the dignity of their laying out and the beauty of the trees, the grass and the flowers. You may recollect those lines of Andrew Marvell:

He nothing common did or mean  
Upon that memorable scene.

This might, I think, be the spirit inspiring and directing all that is done to commemorate the war and those who have died in it.

What I feared was that from inexperience the young architects might indulge in elaborate sentimentalities, and I warned them that in regard to the design of buildings they could not be too simple and even austere, and that they would do well to take as their model of inspiration the manner of Vauban, the great engineer of Louis XIV, as shown in his forts and military stations. In regard to the lay-out of the grounds and planting, I advised them to follow the straightforward methods of the Formal Garden, with careful observance of the relative value of the expanses of grass in relation to the serried ranks of the white Portland headstones, all of which were to a uniform design. These suggestions were faithfully followed, and in conjunction with the skilled work of the garden staff, the Cemeteries designed by us for the Imperial War Graves Commission rank among the most memorable achievements of this century. I do not know what the French think

of them. The French are chary of compliments to anybody but themselves, and they may feel reluctant to say anything, as their own municipal cemeteries are a disgrace to their civilization.

It was decided by the Commission to have in every cemetery some symbol typical of their meaning. Sir Edwin Lutyens designed the great stone altar, called the Stone of Remembrance, and I designed the War Cross, called the Cross of Sacrifice. I do not know who invented those names. I do not suppose Lutyens invented his. I had nothing to do with mine. What I wanted to do in designing this Cross was to make it as abstract and impersonal as I could, to free it from any association with any particular style, and, above all, to keep clear of any of the sentimentalities of Gothic. This was a man's war far too terrible for any fripperies, and I hoped to get within range of the infinite in this symbol of the ideals of those who had gone out to die. The bronze sword is there to identify it with war—and also there kept ringing in my head that text, "I came not to bring peace but a sword". I never expected the bronze sword to be passed, but the late Archbishop of Canterbury was a wise and tolerant man,<sup>1</sup> and the heads of all the Churches accepted the design.

I took immense pains with the design, working it out on a carefully adjusted system of proportions so that in the four sizes in use<sup>2</sup> the relative proportions of the design were maintained. The Cross has been set up in all the War Cemeteries throughout the Empire. It has also been adopted in many places in England as the local War Memorial, and though some zealous antiquaries may have regretted the absence of cusps and crockets, it has undoubtedly pleased the great majority of English-speaking people. I have had applications for its use from every part of the Empire, and some forty have been carried out in

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Randall Davidson very kindly allowed the full-sized model to be put up in the grounds of Lambeth Palace.

<sup>2</sup> The Cross was used in four sizes, 14 ft., 18 ft., 20 ft. and 24 ft. high, and I took as the module of "the order" the diameter of the shaft immediately above the base.

England under my direct personal supervision. A Cross at Old Buckenham in Norfolk was the first erected in England, followed by one at Rye, and, among the more important examples, having regard to the setting, are the crosses at Bath, Ware in Hertfordshire and Bury in Lancashire. In the latter memorial there is a fine frieze by Herman Cawthra on the wall at the back of the Cross. It was in reference to a Cross erected in Hertfordshire that I received this very charming letter from a lady on the Committee:

I cannot tell you how more than pleased I am with your Cross. It is quite beautiful and I wish I could say to you what I feel about it, but I can't. But I should so like to thank you, as I feel every other wife and mother must do, for having made something which is so exactly what one's heart seems to want.

It was just that that I had hoped to do. My only complaint of its popularity is that it has also been freely pirated all over the country. The design is, of course, my copyright, but I have come across horrible travesties of it in many local memorials apparently executed by the local mason from illustrations of the Cross given in the papers. There is a deplorable example, typical, I regret to say, of many others, in the market-place at Aylesbury. The local man has done his best, but he has simply murdered my Cross. The local committees or their chairman should have known better. They should have realized, quite apart from the fact that they were pirating my design, that the effect of the Cross depended first on the design being followed exactly to the last detail and dimension, and secondly, on the all-important matter of siting. In the Imperial War Graves Cemeteries the very closest consideration was given to the siting of the stone and the Cross, and indeed these were the dominant factors in the general design.

## CHAPTER XVII

War Memorials—The Academy—The Office of Works—The Belgian Memorial—Luton and Thornycroft—The R.A.F. Memorial—The Menin Gate: its Design and Construction, the Opening Ceremony—King Albert—Stephan Zweig.

IN the years 1918–19 everybody was discussing War Memorials, and some anxiety was felt as to the form these would take. Many of us had seen terrible examples in France, and were haunted by the fear of winged angels in various sentimental attitudes. In 1917 the Royal Academy appointed a Memorials Committee consisting of Poynter as Chairman, Webb, Thornycroft, Brock, Charles Sims and myself. I drafted a memorandum of advice on War Memorials for the guidance of municipal and other bodies. A large meeting was held at the Academy, attended by Lords Plymouth, Crawford, Ferrers, Desborough, Sir M. Mond, Earle, Leatham (as representing the War Office), Ware, Kenyon, the Dean of York,<sup>1</sup> the Dean of Wells, and many other distinguished people, and at this meeting the memorandum was adopted, its aim being to advise those who desired guidance as to memorials and “generally to further an organized effort throughout the country to make the memorials of this war worthy of their great occasion”.<sup>2</sup> It was a praiseworthy object, but little came of it: a few people consulted us, but the great majority of War Memorial Committees preferred to keep matters in their own hands. One has noticed a growing tendency in this country to form Societies and Committees for various objects. Most of them work independently of each other,

<sup>1</sup> Foxley Norris, now Dean of Westminster.

<sup>2</sup> Memorandum on War Memorials issued from the R.A. in January 1929.



and the result is a great deal of talk and not very much else.

The Office of Works was also active. Early in 1918, Mond (afterwards Lord Melchett), then first Commissioner of Works, appointed a small committee consisting of himself, Earle, Frampton, Allison<sup>1</sup> and myself, to consider the siting of national memorials in London, a matter of very considerable importance, as sites in the public parks are barred. I find we considered sites for the following memorials: the Royal Artillery, Royal Naval Division, Royal Engineers, Submarines, the R.A.M.C., the Camel Corps, and for statues of Kitchener, Roberts, Scott, Sir George White and Edward VII. Frampton and I were asked to consider the design for the Hudson Memorial in Hyde Park, and although we reported that in our opinion the sculpture was quite unsuitable for its purpose, we were represented in the press as having intimated our approval. At Earle's request, I drafted a memorandum on data supplied by the Office of Works, with the idea of allocating specific districts to statues of specific notables, *e.g.* Whitehall for soldiers, Westminster for politicians, Chelsea for artists and so on. I pointed out that whatever merit there might be in the idea, it was not really very practicable owing to changes of fashion. The Lawyers have long deserted Bloomsbury, and St. John's Wood might say it had just as good a claim to be identified with Artists as Chelsea. Nothing came of the project, and I presume the memorandum is slumbering peacefully in a pigeon-hole of the Office of Works. The functions of this Committee were taken over by the Royal Fine Art Commission, established in 1924.

Meanwhile, I had been busy myself with War Memorials. The Belgian people wished to erect in London a memorial of their gratitude to the British people. An excellent site was given them on the Embankment, and Victor Rousseau, the distinguished Belgian sculptor, was entrusted with the memorial group. Unfortunately, the proposed design of

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Richard Allison, principal architect of the Office of Works.

the setting of the memorial on the north side of the Embankment road was so unsuitable that, at the request of the Office of Works, I made an entirely fresh design. The hemicycle of Portland stone, at the back of Rousseau's group, was carried out from my design, which I presented to the Belgian Committee. In his speech at the Ceremony of unveiling, Lord Curzon forgot to make any mention of the part I had taken in this memorial, but the Belgian Committee were very grateful and wrote to me thanking me for "my devoted and valuable assistance, thanks to your great habilities [*sic*], our Memorial so beautifully designed has received the unanimous approbation both of the public and of the Press". Paul Lambotte and Rousseau also wrote me charming letters of thanks; and H.M. the King of Belgium conferred on me the Order of Leopold I. I was instructed by the L.C.C. to give very careful attention to the back of the Belgian memorial facing the gardens. This I duly did, but at a later date the monument to Lord Cheylesmore, designed by Sir E. Lutyens, was plastered on to the back of the Belgian memorial without any reference to me.

I designed, among others, three important war memorials on the "pylon" motive, that is, a lofty pedestal with a symbol of the purpose of the memorial; the first was at Torquay, the second at Luton and the third the Royal Air Force Memorial on the Embankment. At Luton I collaborated with Hamo Thornycroft, who executed the bronze figure of Victory. I had known Thornycroft from my student days at the Academy when he gave a lecture on Sculpture—one of the very few lectures of which I have any recollection. Thornycroft was a charming man, an idealist and a refined and very sensitive artist, to whose work, in the modern scramble for ugliness and obscenity, less than justice has been done. His figure of Gordon (not the pedestal) in Trafalgar Square is the finest thing of its kind in London, in its profound realization of the character of Gordon and the tragic circumstances of his death. He was not so happy with the Gladstone Memorial, but his

Cromwell is a fine, serious work, and some of us recall the classic austerity of his Teucer and the lithe figure of the Sower with its rhythmical swing and its suggestion of that peaceful countryside which Thornycroft loved so much and to which he finally retired. Thornycroft used to write to me from time to time when the spirit moved him. In a letter written in March 1924 he described a model sent in for a war memorial at Cardiff:

It was a nude, fat woman sprawling on the ground in the action of the Dying Gladiator, with a nude infant by her side, both modelled in the *ancient* Mexican style. It was proposed to execute this in bronze, on a scale of about 60 feet high if the figure stood up—no architecture at all—just on the lawn.

Apparently I had attacked this sort of thing in a letter to *The Times*, for later in the year he wrote to me:

Bravo! Your letter in to-day's *Times* does me good. I'm glad someone has the courage to give a hit straight from the shoulder at this nonsense in modern art stuff, which is a refuge for the ignorant and incompetent.

In 1923 I was called in to design the Royal Air Force Memorial, and was given a site on the Embankment on the landing of one of the existing river staircases. It was a beautiful site, but so limited in area that the dimensions of the plan of the memorial were settled by the necessity of leaving free access space all round it, and this again determined the height to which it was possible to carry the pylon without injuring its proportions. The globe with the golden eagle rising from it in flight enabled me to get the height I wanted. The eagle was modelled by Reid Dick, who, both here and in the lion above the Menin Gate, caught exactly the idea that I was out for. I recollect some objection was taken by one of the Air Force Committee to the gilding, but I stuck to my point, and Lord Hugh Cecil, the Chairman, nobly supported me. He pointed out to the Committee that I was the

artist, that presumably I knew what I wanted and therefore I ought to have it. I have always been grateful to Lord Hugh for this, and when the memorial was completed he wrote me this very kind letter on behalf of the Committee:

.. I-am charged by the Executive Committee of the R.A.F. Memorial to express to you their warm congratulations on the appearance of the Memorial now that it is unveiled. The proportions of it appear to them and, so far as they can judge, to everyone, most just and beautiful, and the impression made by the Memorial has exactly that air of dignity and beauty which is to be desired.

The Committee therefore, sensible of the great debt that they owe to you for your skill and care, wish to add their voices to those of others in heartily congratulating on what all must consider a great work of art.

In the autumn of 1919 I was sent out to Ypres by the War Office to report on sites for the great memorial to be built at Ypres to commemorate all those who had died in the war on the Ypres salient and had no known graves. Three sites had been suggested: the Lille Gate, the Island in the moat to the south-east of the Lille Gate and the Menin Gate. After a careful examination of all three sites I recommended the site of the old Menin Gate on the east side of Ypres, so called because long ago there had been a fortified Gateway here in Vauban's fortification.<sup>1</sup> I advised this site because it was the way by which most of our men had gone out to fight, and also because I saw a great opportunity here in the reflection of a building in the moat which is here about 100 feet wide. When I inspected the site in 1919, there was nothing but a great ragged gap in the ramparts, and the roadway which passed across the moat on a rough broken-down bank was all to pieces. Having settled in my own mind that the Menin Gate was the site, I spent some three days in examining it from every point of view, and reported to the War Office recommend-

<sup>1</sup> When we were excavating for the foundations we came across the brick footings of the old gatehouse.

ing this site.<sup>1</sup> There the matter stayed for some little time. The War Office did not seem to know what to do, and I was informed afterwards that Webb had advised an open competition for the design—an ill-considered suggestion. The problem could only be dealt with by somebody who had studied it on the spot, and who was familiar with all the circumstances of the case. I was in fact the only person who fulfilled those conditions, and Ypres was the centre of the district allotted to me as one of the three Principal Architects of the Imperial War Graves Commission. I should have taken it hardly had the design been taken out of my hands and put to open competition, and such a course would not have been in the public interest. Fortunately, Ware and his colleagues on the Commission were men of sagacity and abundant common sense, who did not allow themselves to be paralysed by red tape, and, finding that under their constitution and terms of reference they had the power to undertake the memorial themselves, they took the matter into their own hands and in 1922 instructed me to proceed with my designs.

The problem was a very difficult one. I had to find space for a vast number of names, estimated at first at some 40,000, but increased as we went on to about 58,600, and it was an essential condition that there should be no obstruction to the roadway during the execution of the works, as the road that passes under the Menin Gate is the principal way out of Ypres going eastwards. The area of the monument was considerable, 104 ft. wide exclusive of the return walls to the ramparts, with a depth east and west of 133 ft., and the height is 69 ft. from the ground to the pedestals above the arches. I was suspicious of the ground, and enquired of my friend, Mr. Koomans, architect to the town of Ypres, what sort of subsoil I should find, and was assured

<sup>1</sup> I reported in 1919: "Of the sites suggested, I recommend that at the Menin Gate as by far the most suitable, inasmuch as it was through this opening on the ramparts that our men went out to attack the German lines. In the second place, the ramparts, the moat and the causeway provide a splendid opportunity for a great Memorial."

that I should find a solid layer of clay extending from Ypres to Tournai. This was cheering news, but I had one or two trial holes dug to make sure, and found to my horror running sand, the worst possible ground for foundations. I think I must have struck a bad patch, in view of the fact that the immense tower of the old Cloth Hall had stood for centuries without failure till it was knocked down by German guns. I decided to use reinforced concrete piles, but the Commission wished me to consult Sir Maurice Fitzmaurice, the engineer, who suggested that we should put an enormous raft of concrete some 30 ft. thick all over the site. This might or might not have stood, but we did not do anything of the sort, and used a thin concrete raft some 2 ft. thick on reinforced concrete piles 36 ft. long and 16 in. square. The ramparts shook when we drove the piles, but nothing collapsed, and it says much for the care and ability of the contractors, Messrs. Somerville, and their staff that no damage was done and nobody was killed in carrying out this difficult and rather dangerous work.

Between the inner and outer arches I designed a Hall of Memory, 115 ft. long by 66 ft. wide, covered in by a half-elliptical coffered concrete vault with a span of 66 ft. A suggestion was made to me by Webb that I should deal with the archway by means of columns along the curb of the footpaths on either side of the road in the manner of the Mall Archway, but this would have ruined the design. The columns would have upset the scale; they would have been in the way, and it would have been impossible to light the inscription panels, an absolutely vital condition of the design. I had seen in the gateway of the seventeenth-century fortifications of Nancy a long brick-vaulted tunnel over a roadway, about half the width of the Menin Gate, with an elliptical brick vault, lit by openings in the crown of the vault, and this suggested to me the idea of the single vault spanning both paths and roadway. My first idea was to form the vault in brick. Fitzmaurice did not seem to think this could be done. I cannot conceive

why,<sup>1</sup> but on thinking it over I came to the conclusion that it would absorb the light instead of reflecting it back, and adopted a reinforced concrete vault<sup>2</sup> with coffers formed solid in the concrete. The effect is good, and the coffers have very remarkable acoustic properties, in breaking up all echoes. --

I tried hard to get the building line on the north side of the road leading from the Cloth Hall to the Menin Gate set back a few feet, in order to get a vista through from the Cloth Hall and the Market-place to the great archway, but plans had already been got out for the rebuilding, and the citizens of Ypres were as tenacious of their sites as the citizens of London had been when Wren made his splendid plans for rebuilding London after the Great Fire. I had also hoped to be able to form a spacious "Place" on the east side at the farther end of the Causeway, in order to bring the grounds on this side into scale with the Causeway and the arch, but here also I was beaten by the indomitable proprietary instincts of the Belgians. Still the Belgians treated us very well all through the building of the Gate. The works proceeded steadily but very slowly. The contractors, Messrs. Somervile, were about two years behind-hand with their contract, but they carried it out in an admirable manner, and in all my experience I have never had better work than was given me at the Menin Gate. The workmen, with the exception of one or two leading hands, were Belgian, and Somerviles produced in their Belgian foreman an absolutely first-class mason, who never made a mistake in the setting and jointing of the great stones of my design, not an easy business, as the angle stones of my Doric cornice weighed about seven tons, just within the capacity of our crane.

<sup>1</sup> I have a profound admiration for engineers when they are dealing with steel and reinforced concrete construction, but very little when they are dealing with bricks and mortar.

<sup>2</sup> The construction of the reinforced concrete vault and the foundations was designed by Dr. Oscar Faber. In making some experimental diagrams of the elevation to test my proportions, I found that the whole scheme of the west elevation worked out in a complete series of equilateral triangles.







THE MENIN GATE

Sir Reginald Blomfield, R.A., Architect. 19

Then I had a first-rate Clerk of Works in Mr. Potter, a young engineer. He and I used to play French billiards in the evenings at the Excelsior Hotel, and I could only make a match of it by counting two for my cannons as against the usual one for his. The splendid lion above the east arch was modelled by my friend and colleague, Reid Dick, who had modelled the eagle on the R.A.F. Memorial. I told him I wanted a massive lion, not fierce and truculent, but patient and enduring, looking outward as a symbol of the latent strength and heroism of our race. Reid Dick did his work well, and again gave me just what I wanted.

The Menin Gate was finished in 1927, after four years of assiduous work, and was opened by Lord Plumer in the presence of the King of the Belgians and many thousands of people. Lord Plumer gave a moving address and was followed by King Albert. After the service the pipers standing full in the beautiful July sun played the lament. It was an impressive ceremony, and for once in a way I felt I had not wholly failed in what I had set out to do. All architects who are honest to themselves can see the faults of their own designs when they see them in actual being; they know that here and there are things which they would alter if they could, but with me the Menin Gate is perhaps the only building that I have ever designed in which I do not want anything altered, and if I am ever remembered, I hope it may be by the Menin Gate, my design for the completion of the Quadrant and Lambeth Bridge.

After the ceremony I was told off to take King Albert over the building. He was very charming and took a keen interest in everything, and just before leaving took a case out of the pocket of his tunic and slipped it into my hand, rather in the way that kindly uncles used to tip one at school. The case contained the badge of the Order of the Crown of Belgium. Our own Government has never shown the slightest recognition of what I had done for the Imperial War Graves Commission or of the Menin Gate itself.

Yet by general consent that memorial was considered

"worthy of its great occasion". *The Times* described it as "the stateliest and the most fitting of all the Memorials which love and admiration have raised to the Glorious dead", and said that the Gate was of "that austere beauty which befits the grand but cruel memories which it recalls". The *Daily Telegraph* and other important papers were as kind as *The Times*. The President of the Belgian Royal Commission of Sites and Monuments sent me an official message of congratulation, and the Gate was declared to be an historical monument.<sup>1</sup> The citizens of Ypres have the "Last Post" played every evening under the archway, but the appreciation that I value most of all came from an unexpected quarter, for it was contained in an article in the *Berliner Tagblatt* of September 16, 1928, written by Stephan Zweig. I have never met that distinguished writer, and I do not suppose that he knew anything about me, but I think he must have felt that I had put my soul into the design of the Menin Gate when he wrote this passage:

Ypres has been bereft of her most renowned work of art. Henceforth no one will, as some did, make a pilgrimage to this out-of-the-way town only to see its magnificent Cloth Hall, standing there broad-shouldered, massive and mighty. In place of that which she has lost, however, Ypres has gained a new monument, and—let me say at once—one that is, both spiritually and artistically, profoundly impressive—the Menin Gate, erected by the English nation to its dead, a monument more moving than any other on English soil.

This gigantic gateway, lofty and of glistening marble,<sup>2</sup> is erected over the road which formerly led towards the enemy. It overshadows the road—the one road of invested Ypres, over which, alike in burning sun and rain, the English regiments advanced towards the front, over which guns, ambulance wagons and munitions were driven and numberless coffins were

<sup>1</sup> "Nous nous faisons un devoir, M. l'architecte, de vous témoigner notre admiration et de vous adresser nos chaleureuses félicitations pour l'œuvre remarquable que vous avez ainsi réalisée" (July 25, 1928). An illustration of the Menin Gate was used on a Belgian stamp in the following year, and this year (1932) the Royal Academy of Belgium elected me an honorary member.

<sup>2</sup> It is, in fact, Euville stone.

borne back. The broad vaulted gateway, Roman in the simplicity of its mass, towers on high, a mausoleum rather than a triumphal arch. On its front facing the enemy there lies on the summit a marble lion,<sup>1</sup> his paw heavily planted as if on his prey which he does not mean to let go: on the reverse side facing the town stands a sarcophagus, gloomy and stern. For this monument is to the dead, the six and fifty thousand English dead at Ypres whose graves could not be found, who lie somewhere crumbled together in a common grave, mutilated beyond recognition by shells, or disintegrating in the water, to all those who, unlike the others, have not their bright white polished stone in the cemeteries round about the town, the individual mark of their last resting-place. To all of these, the six and fifty thousand, this arch has been raised as a common tombstone and all these six and fifty thousand names are engraved in letters of gold—so many, so interminably many, that as on the columns of the Alhambra the writing becomes decorative. It is a memorial, then, offered not to victory, but to the dead—the victims—without any distinction, to the fallen Australians, English, Hindus and Mahomedans who are immortalized to the same degree, and in the same characters, in the same stone, by virtue of the same death. Here there is no image of the King, no mention of victories, no genuflections to generals of genius, no prattle about Archdukes and Princes: only the laconic, noble inscriptions—*Pro Rege, Pro Patria*.

In its really Roman simplicity this monument to the six and fifty thousand is more impressive than any triumphal arch or monument to victory that I have ever seen, and its impressiveness is still further increased by the sight of the heaps of wreaths constantly being laid there by widows, children and friends. For a whole nation makes its pilgrimage every year to this common tomb of its unburied and unreturning soldiers.

<sup>1</sup> Stone, not marble. Zweig is mistaken as to the intention of the lion. It is not the beast of prey that was meant, but the faithful guardian of British honour.

## CHAPTER XVIII

The English Church at Ypres—The Royal Academy—The Chantrey Fund and the 1904 Committee—Lord Curzon's Committee of 1912—My Analysis and Report, 1917—"Considerations on the Policy and Position of the Royal Academy, 1918"—The Reforms—The President, 1918—Webb—The Election, 1924, and Dicksee.

THE ceremony at the Menin Gate terminated my connection with the Imperial War Graves Commission. I had worked with Ware and his staff for nearly ten years—Durham and Robinson in Baker Street, La Fontaine, Binnie and Higginson in France—without a single hitch or misunderstanding from first to last, and I left them with real regret on the completion of an undertaking of great importance and profound interest. Ware wrote to me in December 1927:

I think you will understand it, when I say that everybody working had wished, looking back on the past years, to send you a special message of gratitude for the great work that you have done for the Commission. . . . We are all deeply grateful to you, and very proud to have been associated with you.

I still had work to do at Ypres in designing and superintending the building of the English Memorial Church, the School and Parsonage, which occupy a corner site to the north-west of the Cathedral. After the war several English families stayed on in Ypres, more particularly those of the gardening staff of the Imperial War Graves Commission. In an appeal for help made by Lord Plumer in 1931, it was stated that there were more than two hundred British residents living permanently in Ypres, and as many more in the neighbourhood, most of them employed by the I.W.G.C.

in the care of the cemeteries. "Before the school was started the children were growing up in complete ignorance of their own language, but now they can all speak English." The new school was provided by Eton in memory of Old Etonians who had fallen in the war; the Church, the Parsonage and the Pilgrims' Room were provided by subscriptions from many sources, mainly from those who had lost relations in the war; indeed, the tower of the church, the stained-glass windows, the brasses and all the fittings of the church are memorials to the dead.

I must now hark back ten years and give my recollections of what happened at home in those important years for the Royal Academy, 1913-19. The report of a Committee dealing with the Chantrey Bequest appeared in 1915, a year and a half after the Committee had completed its report, and in 1918-19 some far-reaching reforms were made in the Constitution of the Academy itself. I had been elected a Royal Academician in 1914, and had long been conscious that some reorganization was necessary. The Academy had been violently attacked for several years as slow and incompetent by all sorts of people, and early in the century its critics opened a systematic campaign against its administration of the Chantrey Bequest. In 1904 Lord Lytton moved in the House of Lords "That a Select Committee be appointed to enquire into the administration of the Chantrey Trust and if necessary make recommendations". The Committee was appointed, with Lord Crewe as Chairman,<sup>1</sup> and proceeded to examine witnesses on the following principal points:

- (1) The purpose of the Bequest. Was it to encourage British artists, or to establish a gallery of modern British art?
- (2) How far its purpose had been carried out.
- (3) Whether the conditions under which purchases had to be made injuriously affected the Chantrey Collection.

<sup>1</sup> The Committee consisted of Lord Crewe (Chairman) and Lords Lytton, Carlisle, Windsor, Ribblesdale, Newton and Killanin.

- (4) Whether better results might be obtained by taking the entire administration of the Fund out of the hands of the Academy.

Ten meetings were held, and witnesses were examined representing the Academy on the one hand, and various persons connected with art galleries or interested in the arts.<sup>1</sup> The Academicians maintained that Chantrey's object had been, not to establish a gallery of modern art, but "to encourage art in this country through artists". Messrs. MacColl, Phillips, Quilter, Ward, Wallis, Bate, Armstrong and Guthrie contended that Chantrey had meant to establish "a Gallery of all Modern schools", though Chantrey had expressly restricted purchases to work "entirely executed within the shores of Great Britain". MacColl was the only witness on behalf of "what you might term the attack",<sup>2</sup> who endeavoured to justify the assault on principle. He contended that the testator was a "continuing being", and that if he were alive to-day he would regard the works of Degas, Monet, Pissarro and Rodin as suitable for the purposes of his bequest—the most brilliant *petitio principii* that I have ever come across. With this divergence of view as to the purpose of the Trust, no agreement was possible as to the success of the Academy in its administration. MacColl thought the collection of pictures bought under the Chantrey Fund was "grossly imperfect". Mr. Fry thought that the Chantrey Fund should be taken out of the hands of the Academy, handed over to the Tate Gallery and administered by a "trained expert" from outside, whoever such a person might be, for Mr. Fry did not define his "expert", probably a journalist or a dealer; anyhow, not an executant artist. Mr. Heseltine and Lord Davey, on the other hand, held that the Academy had

<sup>1</sup> The witnesses for the Academy were Sir E. J. Poynter, Sir W. B. Richmond, Sir L. Alma-Tadema, Briton Riviere, Leslie, Brock, Davis, Frampton, Lucas, Prinsep, Sargent, Stone, and Eaton (the Secretary); not of the Academy: Count Kessler, Lord Davey, Sir J. Guthrie, Sir W. M. Conway, Sir W. Armstrong, Messrs. MacColl, Fry, Nichols, Phillips, Quilter, Heseltine, Ward, Bate, Wallis, Holmes, Dell, Spielmann and Prof. F. Brown.

<sup>2</sup> Prof. Fred Brown in his evidence.

administered the Fund "in accordance with Sir Francis Chantrey's will". The Select Committee reported to the House of Lords that the collection, as a National Gallery of British Art, was not sufficiently representative, but that this was due to the conditions of purchase, not to interested action on the part of the Academy. "The Committee desire to distinctly record their belief that there is no ground for any imputation of corrupt or interested motive against that body"; they made certain recommendations in regard to methods of selection and purchase, but expressly recommended that the Committee of Selection should be a Committee of three, to consist of the President of the Academy, an R.A. appointed by the Council, and an A.R.A. nominated by the body of Associates.

This conclusion did not at all satisfy the enemies of the Academy, and they returned to the attack, led by Lord Curzon. In 1911 a Committee had been appointed by the Trustees of the National Gallery (*not by Parliament*) to enquire into "the retention of important pictures in this country, and other matters connected with the National Art Collections". Lord Curzon was Chairman, and the other members were Sir Edgar Vincent (now Lord D'Abernon), Mr. Benson, Trustees of the National Gallery, and Sir C. Holroyd, Director of the National Gallery. Among the matters into which they enquired was the Chantrey Fund. The Chairman himself drafted a memorandum in regard to its purchases, printed as an appendix to the report, and the witnesses examined were Poynter, Colvin, C. H. Read, Walter Armstrong, Harcourt-Smith, Aitken, MacColl, Holmes, Clutton Brock, Fry, Herbert Cook, Locket Agnew, Fairfax Murray and R. Ross. Only one witness, Poynter, was invited to give evidence on behalf of the Chantrey Trust, all the rest were more or less the avowed enemies of the Academy, and with the exception of Holmes and MacColl (both of whom then worked only in water-colour) and Fry, were not artists at all, but collectors, keepers of galleries and museums, and press critics.



The three questions on which evidence was asked were:

- (1) Should the recommendations of the 1904 Chantrey Committee be carried out?
- (2) Would the Trustees of the National Gallery be justified in refusing to hang in the Tate Gallery pictures bought under the Chantrey Bequest by the Committee of the Royal Academy?
- (3) "Should the Trustees of the National Gallery have power to loan or store pictures bought under the Chantrey Bequest?"

With the exception of Poynter, and two witnesses to whom the Chairman omitted to put these questions, all the witnesses were in favour of taking the matter out of the hands of the Academy, and when Mr. Holmes was reached the Chairman remarked that there was "no need to question you further because we know your views, and so far have not found anybody who disagrees with them", a somewhat disingenuous remark, based without acknowledgement on the fact that Poynter's evidence was not reached till the sixth day of the enquiry. Lord Curzon, apparently forgetting that he was Chairman and not an advocate, had done his best to elicit all the evidence hostile to the Academy that he could.

The Committee finally recommended: (1) That legislation be undertaken to hand over the Chantrey Fund to the Trustees of the Tate Gallery; (2) that with a view to this legislation, the Trustees of the Tate Gallery should not accept pictures in the selection of which they had had no voice; (3) that failing such legislation the Trustees should at their own discretion store or loan pictures in the Chantrey collection instead of exhibiting them in the Tate Gallery; (4) that there should be a new Board of Trustees for the Tate Gallery, and (5) that unless the income of the Chantrey Fund was placed at the disposal of this Board an annual grant be made by the Government. It was this income of the Chantrey Bequest of about £2000 a year which Lord Curzon and his friends were after, and

Lord Curzon allowed himself to make the false statement that the administration of this fund had been "unfavourably reported on by a Select Committee of the House of Lords" though that Committee had gone out of its way to repudiate any such charge. The report of Lord Curzon's Committee was issued as a Blue Book in 1915, printed under the authority of H.M. Stationery Office, and everybody supposed that it was the report of a Government Committee, but it was nothing of the sort. The Committee was, in fact, a self-appointed Committee of the Trustees of the National Gallery, whereas the 1904 Committee was appointed by the House of Lords to consider the Chantry Fund. Its enquiry was conducted by the Chairman, Lord Crewe, with scrupulous fairness and courtesy. Both sides of the case in the proceedings of the 1904 Committee were adequately represented, and in the result, the Committee reported that there were no grounds for any imputation of interested motives to the Academy, and confined themselves to suggesting certain alterations in the Committee of Selection in the Academy, a wider interpretation of the will and more attention to exhibitions outside the Academy. These were fair and reasonable conclusions from the evidence before the Committee, which had the sympathy of several members of the Academy itself.

Lord Curzon's Committee was on quite a different footing, and its procedure compared very unfavourably with that of the Committee of 1904. As this fact did not seem to be realized, I went into the reports of both Committees thoroughly in 1917, and in a pamphlet<sup>1</sup> issued to members by the Academy, I summarized their proceedings, commented on them at some length and gave my own conclusions: (1) That the recommendations of the Committee of 1904 ought to be carried out, and that the Director of the Tate Gallery should be added as assessor or adviser to the Committee of Purchase and Selection; (2) that the Committee should visit other galleries as part of their regular official duties; (3) that outside Societies should report to

<sup>1</sup> Printed in full as Appendix I.

the Academy 'the existence of works which they consider worthy of purchase; (4) that the time of purchase should be extended throughout the whole year, instead of restricting it to the time prior to the opening of the Summer Exhibition; and (5) that legal opinion be taken as to the procedure necessary to give effect to these proposals, having regard to the terms of the Trust. Poynter and Briton Riviere congratulated me on the clear and workmanlike analysis of the situation, but Poynter expressed some disappointment at the conclusions that I had drawn. I think he would have left things as they were, but as I pointed out in my pamphlet,

Though its position may be technically unassailable, it is no longer right for the Academy to sit passively within its legal entrenchments. I submit that the time has come for the Academy to bring forward its own solution of the difficulties that have arisen, and to assert its rightful claim to be the centre and leader of all serious movements in the art of this country, "not excluding those manifestations of art of a very extreme and absolute character, which in time do not seem extreme, but seem the right thing".

The last sentence appeared in the evidence of Sargent before the Committee of 1904. I do not know whether he would have included in this category the works of M. Picasso. As a matter of fact, these recommendations did serve as the basis of the arrangement in regard to selection finally made between the Academy and the Tate Gallery, under the guidance of Aston Webb, but in his anxiety to reach a compromise Webb went too far in admitting two outsiders out of five to a trust which, so far as the law stood, was purely an Academy Trust.

The Chantrey Bequest was only one of the problems of that time, and it was clear to me that unless the atmosphere was cleared within the Academy itself, there was going to be serious trouble in the near future. Attempts at reform had been made from time to time. La Thangue tried early in this century, and soon after 1904 there was a meeting in Alma-Tadema's studio to discuss possible

reforms. Jackson took the lead and nominated me as Secretary, but as far as I remember that was the one and only meeting and nothing came of it. After I had become a full member, I discussed the possibility of reforms with several of my colleagues, and found them quite ready to consider reforms if only somebody would take the initiative and put them into practical shape. Finally, in June 1918, I took my courage in my hands, and wrote a carefully considered paper entitled "Considerations on the Policy and Position of the Royal Academy". This paper was read to a full assembly<sup>1</sup> of Academicians. I pointed out that the Academy had lost ground in the last twenty-five years.<sup>2</sup> It had been violently attacked in the Press. It appeared to have lost the confidence of the Government, and its own members were not entirely satisfied with the state of affairs and the policy of the Academy. It was "time to take stock of the position. . . . We have come to the parting of the ways, and shall have to make up our minds whether we mean to go up hill or down." I called attention to five main points: general policy, the Summer Exhibition, the Schools, the Constitution of the Academy and the position of the Associates.

(1) In regard to Policy, the Academy was too exclusive, and made the mistake of keeping the public at arm's length, "but we shall have to come out into the market-place like everybody else" and take the public into our confidence. Artists and Societies of artists should pull together instead of regarding each other as dangerous rivals.

(2) In regard to the Summer Exhibition, it should be borne in mind that this was not only a Show, but was also the complement of the education given in our schools. As

<sup>1</sup> The notice convening the Assembly on January 17, 1918, had printed in large type, "In view of the Importance of the Business, members are requested to make a special effort to attend"—and they did. The paper is given in full in Appendix II.

<sup>2</sup> A writer in the *New Witness* (May 17, 1918) said: "The decadence of the Academy seems to be due not so much to disease as to decreasing vitality". D. Y. Cameron wrote to me in July 1918: "It is not a moment too soon, this step towards reform, as we were on the very edge of a precipice".

such, the Acad my should insist on technical excellence and high ideals, and it ought to raise the standard of admission in regard to all works submitted for exhibition. It might be desirable to admit small and beautiful objects as representative of the handicrafts, and it was only fair that the Associates, who were very important contributors to the summer exhibitions, should be represented on the Hanging Committee, which at the time was restricted to members of the Council.

(3) In regard to the Schools, I pointed out that owing to altered conditions our schools no longer fulfilled their original purpose. At a time when there was one recognized technique, and the number of those who set out to be artists was limited, the Academy Schools did all that was required and more, but owing to the well-meant if misguided educational efforts of the State to help anybody and everybody who aspired to be an artist, the country was flooded with incompetent art students, and the standard of building and equipment of art schools was so high that our schools could not compete in this regard with State-aided schools. Moreover, the Academy suffered through its own generosity. Its training was given gratuitously, and our schools were filled with imperfectly trained students anxious to get their training for nothing. This low standard of attainment lowered the prestige of the school and wasted the time of the Visitors. The remedy was to go for quality not quantity, to make our Schools final Schools of Art for the best students in the country. This policy, by the way, I had advocated before. Some progress had been made in 1914-15, but the war stopped everything, and I now urged that the policy be taken up again, and dealt with in a "broad statesmanlike and comprehensive manner", and no longer as merely the private affair of the Academy.

(4) As to the Council, I pointed out that members could only serve on it for two continuous years, and owing to this had little part in the real conduct of affairs. This was bad for the Academy, as it left the control in the hands of the officers only, and bad for members, as they lost interest in

the Academy. More should be done by Committees nominated by the General Assembly of Academicians; for instance, in addition to the Finance Committee there should be Committees of the Schools, of the Exhibitions, and of Public Policy, and at the age of eighty members might join the list of Retired Academicians, making way for younger men. I also suggested that instead of the formality of an annual election, the President should hold office for five years, and then stand for re-election. This would give members a real chance of electing somebody else if they wished to. I pointed out that the Royal Academy resembled the Government of the Venetian Republic, in that power resided equally in all its members, and the President was only *primus inter pares*.

(5) As to the Associates, their position was unsatisfactory. "They contribute largely to the success of the Exhibition and take their full share in the working of the schools,<sup>1</sup> yet they have no voice in the management of the schools and a very small one in connection with the Exhibitions", and I might have added, they do not vote at the election of the President. I suggested that the Associates should be represented on the various Committees, and that their numbers should be increased to include workers in other arts. When suggestions of reform had been made in earlier years, they had always been blocked by appeals "to the Instrument"; that is, the original charter of the Academy drawn up just about 150 years before the date of my address. I pointed out, in conclusion, that after all the Instrument could be altered, and that "if the position is squarely faced, if the Academy sets its house in order, and, instead of banging and bolting the doors, throws them open to all that is best in the Art of the time, it will have an opportunity which may never occur again, not only of regaining its splendid past, but of contributing a unique and valuable service to the welfare of the State".

These were brave words in 1918, and it is the irony of time that since those days I should have been considered

<sup>1</sup> Since altered.

to be a reactionary, because I will not bow my head in the house of Rimmon, in other words, accept the verdicts of journalistic criticism on what is good, bad and indifferent in art. My address was received with sympathy by many of the Academicians present. Poynter, in spite of his advanced age, was keenly interested. Frank Short, not yet Treasurer to the Academy, not yet the faithful watchdog suspicious of all movements, said in a short speech that my address was "like the east wind, searching out every nook and cranny of the Academy". Jackson's only criticism was that I did not go far enough, but I was only breaking up ground and meant to go a good deal farther. Clausen congratulated me on the paper, but added, "I hae ma doots". Fine artist as he is, I sometimes think that Clausen's mind works so conscientiously round a subject that he misses the essential point. Webb, Cope, Alfred Parsons and Cameron were full of sympathy with the idea of reform, and I have a charming letter from Briton-Riviere, then a very old man, saying that he was in entire agreement with the general principles of my address. In the result a "Constitution Committee" was appointed in July 1918 to go into all issues raised in my address and to report to the Council. The Committee consisted of Poynter (Chairman), Gow (Keeper), Webb (Treasurer), Cope, Blomfield, Frampton, Clausen, Dicksee, Short, Jackson, Goscomb John, Llewellyn, Lutyens and Derwent Wood. The active members were Webb, Cope, Frampton, Derwent Wood and Llewellyn, then an Associate, who at a meeting of the Council had said bluntly that many of the Academicians ought to be thinking of making their wills. On November 6, 1918, the Committee reported the following unanimous recommendations:

(1) That Academicians and Associates on reaching the age of seventy-five should become Senior Academicians<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I had found that nobody wanted to be called a "Retired Academician" because it suggested that they had retired from work, so I invented the term "Senior Academician", which satisfied everybody. Jackson wrote to me to this effect at the end of November 1918.

and Senior Associates, creating vacancies in their respective classes.

(2) That they shall be allowed to send to the Exhibition half the works allowed to acting members (that is three instead of six); that Senior Academicians shall not be eligible to serve on the Council or any Committee of the Academy, but shall be entitled to attend but not to vote at meetings.

(3) Newly elected Academicians to serve on the Council in rotation and by order of seniority of election. The numbers of members to remain as before.

(4) That the sections of Painting, Sculpture, Architecture and Engraving should meet before the election of Associates and star the candidates whom they consider most deserving of election.

(5) That there should be a class of artist-craftsmen.

(6) That there should be a Standing Schools Committee, with the executive control of the schools, subject to reference to the Council.

(7) The Finance Committee as at present.

(8) A Standing Committee of public policy, with the President as Chairman.

(9) That the Selection Committee should consist of the President and five members serving their first year on the Council, and three painters, one sculptor and one architect, of whom three should be Associates, elected from the whole body by a general assembly of Academicians and Associates. The Committee to elect the Hanging Committee from their own number, but not less than two members to be Associates.

I was asked by the Committee to introduce these proposals to the Assembly, and in doing so said that the Constitution Committee had concentrated their attention on general principles rather than details, and that the object at which they had aimed was to quicken circulation in both classes of members, to give the Associates better representation, to extend the elective principle in the Committees of the Academy, and to ensure that the election



of Associates should be more carefully considered and that artist-craftsmen should be represented in the Academy.

The first clause passed without much opposition, but at the second clause limiting the works of Senior Academicians and depriving them of their vote, a chasm suddenly opened in front of us. I could see that, not unnaturally, the Old Guard meant to fight the clause tooth and nail. I went across to Webb, who as Treasurer sat on the right of the President, and asked him what should be done. Webb, however, would give no advice; he may have thought that he was precluded from doing so as an official, but he was a very cautious person who hated failure so much that, sooner than risk it, he would do nothing at all. For myself, I like men who take their fences as they come, and do not wait for somebody else to make a gap or sit on the fence to see which side to fall off. I saw that if this clause was not altered the whole scheme of reform would be defeated, so I went back to my seat, got up at once and said that there would be no alteration in the number of works allowed to senior members in the Summer Exhibition and that they would retain their votes. After that there was no serious difficulty in subsequent meetings. Only one clause was rejected, that creating an artist-craftsman class of Associates, which Pomeroy defeated in my absence, by preventing its getting the requisite majority.

By the end of the year 1918 all the proposals of the Constitution Committee had been passed, except that relating to the Selection and Hanging Committees. Amendments to the Committee's proposal were moved by Hacker, who was more concerned with seniority and rotation than with the future of Associates, and also by Cope, but the Committee's proposals were finally passed. Webb and I also succeeded in securing a very important regulation, that in future there were to be not less than four Architect Academicians and four Architect Associates, this regulation also to apply to Sculptors. There had been a custom, by no means always followed, that when a vacancy occurred among the Architects or Sculptors it should be

filled by an Architect or Sculptor, but the 'Painters had tended to monopolize the vacancies. At one time I was the only Architect Associate, and when I was elected an R.A. in 1914 there were only two Architect Academicians, Webb and Jackson. Not only was the new rule an act of justice to Architects and Sculptors, but it has checked the constant tendency of the Academy to concentrate its energies on painting to the neglect of the other arts, with the result that it loses sight of its function as an Academy, in its anxiety to make the most of its Summer Exhibition. Since the reforms were passed in 1918-19 the three Committees of Schools, Public Policy and Exhibition have been dropped, the organization of the Schools has been completely altered, and the Sectional meetings have fallen into disuse; but the vitally essential reforms of the creation of a class of Senior Academicians and the representation of Associates remain. They have stood the test of time, and done more to revitalize the Academy than anything done in the last hundred years.

Poynter, who had shown a friendly attitude to reform from the first, retired in November 1918. We tried hard to induce Sargent to stand as President, but he would not hear of it, and Webb was elected President in January 1919. Though he had baulked at the last fence, he had always been in favour of reform, and his tact and practical sagacity had been invaluable. I supported him for President for all I was worth, and in answer to my letter of congratulation on his election he wrote to me on January 22, 1919: "I shall count much on your help; we have worked very happily together for a good many years now, and I hope we may continue to do so. I value your support very much more perhaps than you know." In his later years we drew apart, but for some twenty years we worked together in most of the important movements connected with the Arts—both in the Academy and the Royal Institute of British Architects. Webb retired under the age limit in 1924, and the choice of his successor in the Presidency became a burning question. The majority of painters, including the

Old Guard, wanted Dicksee, and elderly Academicians were dragged up from the other end of England to vote for him. The party of movement wanted me, as the man who had begun and carried to a successful issue the reforms of the Academy, but they were late in the field, and I only agreed to stand about a fortnight before the election. Still, it was a close-run thing, Dicksee only coming in by a majority of three—seventeen votes for him as against fourteen for me.

Quid est, Catulle? quid moraris emori?  
Sella in curuli struma Nonius sedet,  
Per consulatum peierat Vatinius.  
Quid est, Catulle? quid moraris emori?

However, I took it as part of the day's work, and Dicksee was very nice about it. When I congratulated him directly after the result was declared, he modestly said that he knew he was a dull fellow, and that had I been a Painter there would have been no question about my election as President. As a matter of fact, it would have been too much to expect the Painters to accept two architects in succession as Presidents. When Poynter retired, Cope wrote to me: "I think it would be a good thing if possible to bottle Sargent and get him elected right off. . . . I do think a painter President essential." If it was essential in 1918 it would naturally seem still more essential in 1924. I backed Dicksee up in one or two awkward episodes later on, but though an amiable man he became a little difficult. I think his brilliant success early in his career<sup>1</sup> and this final success at the end of it rather clouded his judgement. He failed, perhaps, to realize that the President of the Academy is not a schoolmaster ruling a class, but a Chairman among his equals, and that if he wishes to guide his colleagues he must do so with tact and discretion, and with a scrupulous observance of the constitutional limitations of the Chair.

<sup>1</sup> Dicksee's picture of "Harmony" was bought by the Chantrey Trust in 1877 for £367 : 10s., and another picture of his, "The Two Crowns", was bought in 1900 for £2000.

## CHAPTER XIX

Sulgrave Manor—Visit to America—The Royal Fine Art Commission—The Royal Gallery—South Africa House—The Rebuilding of the Quadrant, Piccadilly Circus and the Shaftesbury Memorial.

IN the village of Sulgrave, about six miles from Banbury, there is an old farm-house known as Sulgrave Manor which belonged to the Washington family in the seventeenth century. The roof of the main part dates from the fifteenth century, and there are a few traces of later work of considerable interest. The house and adjacent grounds had been bought by a Committee as a memorial of the celebration of one hundred years of peace between England and America. The whole place was in a deplorable state, and on February 21, 1914, a meeting of a joint British and American Committee was held at the American Embassy to consider what was to be done with it. On the following morning representatives of the Committee motored down to Sulgrave to inspect the building. The party consisted of the Duke of Teck, Lord Bryce, a Mr. Stewart who represented the American Committee, Shirley Benn and Robert Donald, Hon. Secretaries, and Mr. Perris, the Secretary. I went with them as architect. Bryce, though an old man, was as active as a boy and very cheerful company. I have forgotten exactly what was decided, but the first thing to do was to put the building into some sort of repair. At that time little money was available, and it was not till a good deal later that the whole building was reconditioned and added to from my designs, and an entirely new Formal Garden and orchard designed by me made on the south and east sides of the building. The cost was met mainly from funds collected on the other side of the Atlantic. The house has been

furnished in excellent taste with fittings and furniture, old and new, by a Committee of Ladies. Sulgrave Manor in its completed state, with its bowling-green, its yew hedges, its orchard and its garden of old English flowers, gives a very good idea of what the place might have been when it was occupied by the first Washington who owned it, a mayor of Northampton.

Sulgrave Manor owes a great deal to the enthusiasm of those American ladies, "the Colonial Dames", but the man who saved the situation was Arthur Lee.<sup>1</sup> Everything had gone well with the enterprise up to a certain point, but there came a check, after which the situation became more and more embarrassing, till Lee came into action, and his clear head and masterful methods straightened things out with amazing rapidity. The building and its contents and the grounds are now in excellent order, and Sulgrave Manor is visited every year by countless Americans, some of whom may think that George Washington first showed his unpleasant countenance at Sulgrave, though it is improbable that he ever heard of the place in far-distant Virginia, or if he had, would have cared two straws about it. Some of the Colonial Dames whom I had met at a garden party given at Sulgrave by Lord and Lady Lee I met again some years later in New York. Ever since the publication of *The Mistress Art* I had corresponded from time to time with Professors of the Fine Arts in America. Hamlin wrote to me from Columbia University, "This new volume [*The Mistress Art*] simply confirms the impression I had received from your breadth of taste and catholicity of judgement, as well as your skill in putting things in an incisive and interesting way", and after the war I was invited by Cornell University to deliver twelve lectures on any subject I liked but preferably architecture. Though the invitation was flattering and the terms liberal, I did not accept it, as I was very busy at the time, and it would have meant two months out of England, but the Americans had not forgotten me, for in 1929 I received an invitation from the

<sup>1</sup> Lord Lee of Fareham.

American Academy of Arts and Letters to 'come as the Guest of the Academy to the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of its foundation. American hospitality when they mean to be hospitable is princely. The American Academy paid all expenses, and I was looked after like a brother by my old friend Cass Gilbert, the well-known American architect, who designed the Woolworth building, at that time the biggest of those gigantic buildings that loom from far away as the liner passes Long Island and approaches New York. In point of fact I was only there some eight days, but as usual it was a busy time. I had to make four speeches, and did my best on orange-ade, but my audience were sympathetic, and they were pleased when I advised them to follow their own destiny in the arts, and not to trouble about the latest lights of art in Europe. For the first time the American Academy appointed five corresponding members, and I had a wireless on the *Mauretania* informing me that I had been elected one of the five. Barrie, Elgar, Galsworthy and Orpen were the other four, and as J. C. Squire was one of my travelling companions, I have a vivid memory of that hectic week. Apart from the charming people who entertained us so generously, my recollection of New York is one of inordinate buildings, restless movement, incessant noise and unnecessary hustle. After our kindly old London, New York seems to me a city without a heart. Yet I am glad to have seen it and got a glimpse of this terrible new world, so remote from the New England of the seventeenth century and the America of the eighteenth, when one of the Blomfields was Governor of New Jersey, and had the town of "Bloomfield" named after him in honour of his services in the War of Independence.

The question of a Ministry of Fine Arts had often been raised, and in Chapter XIII I have described the futile attempt made in 1914 to establish such a Ministry. Nothing came of the scheme and it went the way of many another well-meant project in August 1914; but after the war, though a Ministry of Fine Arts was out of the question, it

was felt that some steps ought to be taken to stem the rising tide of vandalism and vulgarity, and that there ought to be some competent authority to which the Government and Public Bodies could refer for advice on artistic questions.

Lionel Earle was keenly interested in its establishment, and Webb and I were working together, in the face of some difficulties. Webb wrote to me in April 1921:

I agree with you this matter has not been particularly well run, but I think the Academy should at any rate see if they can get support towards the appointment of a Fine Art Commission. Matters, of course, are somewhat altered by the appointment of Lord Crawford as First Commissioner, which is I think an excellent one.

And so it turned out, for it was largely through Lord Crawford's efforts that the Royal Fine Art Commission was set up under His Majesty's Royal sign-manual in May 1924. Its terms of reference were "to enquire into such questions of public amenity or of artistic importance as may be referred to them from time to time by any of our Departments of State and to report thereon to such Departments", and also to advise public and quasi-public bodies on such matters at their (the Commission's) discretion.

The first members of the Commission were Lord Crawford (Chairman), Lord Curzon, Sir Aston Webb, Sir Reginald Blomfield, Sir Edwin Lutyens, Mr. Gotch (then President of the Institute), Sir George Frampton, Mr. (now Sir) D. Y. Cameron and Mr. T. Mawson (Town Planning Institute). Lord Curzon had at first opposed the scheme, but when it was suggested that he, of course, would be a member, he accepted it with alacrity, and became a very useful member of the Commission. Since its establishment the Commission has advised on the design and siting of memorials, on new bridges, new public buildings and their decoration, the preservation of historic buildings and many other matters. Its advice has been accepted except in one notorious instance, the New South Africa House in Tra-

falgar Square. The Commission were unanimous in their opinion that the design was unsuitable for its position in relation to the National Gallery and the buildings on the west side, and they reported accordingly. The Minister responsible in the Labour Government did not take our advice, with the result that all chance of transforming the three sides of Trafalgar Square into a balanced composition worthy of its national importance is lost irretrievably. The Commission had to take a firm line in regard to the proposed decoration of the Royal Gallery in the House of Lords. Designs had been prepared by a famous artist, and they were undoubtedly able. *Sed non nunc erat his locus*. The designs ignored the great cartoons by Maclise,<sup>1</sup> both in motive, colour and treatment. If they were carried out, those cartoons would have had to go, and the whole Gallery redecorated in an entirely different scheme of colour. The Commission were faced not only with the reputation of the artist and some support from other painters, but also with the fact that the designs were very far advanced before the Commission was consulted. Moreover, when it did come before the Commission, that body had great difficulty in extracting any information from that wily old gentleman, Lord Carrington, the Hereditary Grand Chamberlain. After very careful consideration the Commission advised against the proposed designs and the scheme was abandoned. I had come across Lord Carrington many years before at High Wycombe, when he consulted me about his garden. He was courteous and genial, and on that occasion out of the kindness of his heart presented me with a walking-stick. I had noticed several hazel sticks in the hall, and he explained that they were all made on his estate, I think in Wales. He selected a beautiful straight stick and presented it to me, and I expressed my gratification in suitable terms, but whether it was his eyesight or his benevolence that failed him, when he saw what an excellent stick it was, he took it back, said

<sup>1</sup> The death of Nelson and the meeting of Wellington and Blucher after Waterloo.



he would give me a better one, and selected another stick full of knobs and rather crooked. Still, one should not look a gift horse in the mouth, however decrepit it may be.

I must go back just twenty years in reference to the rebuilding of the Quadrant. Nash's buildings had to come down at the end of the Crown Lease, and when they were destroyed it became the fashion to say that they were refined and elegant buildings, showing a grace denied to what was to succeed them. When I was a student, I was taught to regard them as the last word in vulgarity and ridiculous building. In actual fact the details of the design were exceedingly trivial, and the only real merit in Nash's design was the curve of the Quadrant, and a certain pleasant urbanity due to the fact that the buildings were relatively low. If Nash was responsible for the lay-out, he ought always to be remembered gratefully for that splendid curve. I have looked up old Fergusson to see what he thought of Nash just over seventy years ago, and this is what he says of him:

With the aid of a few columns stuck here and there, or rich window dressings and rustications in another place, and aided by the fatal facility of stucco, they<sup>1</sup> managed to get over an immense amount of space with a very slight expenditure of thought.

In regard to Nash and Holland I think this criticism is to some extent justified, and in fact nobody thought much of the Quadrant till it was pulled down. Norman Shaw was called in to design the New Quadrant in 1905. He prepared a grandiose design, with rusticated arches on the ground floor, and rusticated Ionic columns above, running through three storeys and supporting a bold entablature. Above this was a row of stone dormers and an immense slate roof with dormers, and lofty stone chimney stacks at frequent intervals. Five drawings of the design made by Mr. English, a well-known draughtsman of the time, were

<sup>1</sup> Holland, Burton and Nash. Fergusson is quite wrong about Decimus Burton, who was a very refined architect, and designed the Athenaeum and the screen at Hyde Park Corner.

exhibited in the Summer Exhibition of the Royal Academy, and made a great sensation. Everybody said how wonderful they were considering Shaw's age, which had nothing whatever to do with it; but greatly as I admired Shaw both as a man and as an architect, my own opinion at the time was that the design was unsuitable for its purpose. It was very costly, it did not give the tradesmen what they wanted and it was a strange mixture of design in the Grand Manner, and of that free and fanciful invention of which Shaw was a consummate master. In his latter days he was constantly feeling his way to larger design, but great artist though he was, his conversion came too late, for his early training had been among the strictest sect of the Neo-Gothic architects. I have often thought what splendid buildings Shaw would have given us if he had been born twenty years later, and been thoroughly grounded in the technique of classical architecture.

The Piccadilly Hotel was completed from Shaw's design, 1908, at a great cost. There are fine passages in the design of the Piccadilly front, but the shortcomings on the Quadrant side for all practical purposes were obvious. It was not what the tradesmen wanted. They had to pay the Crown very high rents for their leases, and they declined to go on with the design. The whole undertaking came to a dead end. In September 1912, the year that Shaw died, the Treasury appointed a Committee to consider what was to be done. Lord Plymouth, then First Commissioner of Works, was the Chairman, and the other members were Sir Henry Tanner (Office of Works), John Murray (Woods and Forests) and I, as President of the Institute. We issued our report in February 1913. Two years later (1915) another Committee was appointed consisting of Harcourt (then First Commissioner of Works) as Chairman, Lord Selborne and Mr. (now Sir George) Leveson Gower of the Woods and Forests. The members of the 1912 Quadrant Committee were invited to attend the meetings of this Committee, and at my request Webb and Newton were associated with me, as the responsibility of settling what was to be done

with the Quadrant seemed to me a very serious matter. Evidence was taken from various witnesses, both Architects and Tradesmen, and we sent in our report with recommendations as to general treatment. The problem, of course, was to alter Shaw's design without destroying it. We recommended that the main lines of his entablature, the dormers and the roof line should be maintained, but the chimney stacks omitted.

Some little time after this the Commissioner of Woods and Forests asked us to undertake the new designs for the completion of the Quadrant, but it was obvious that three architects of quite different individualities could not make the design, and as I had been working on the problem before Webb and Newton had been invited to join the Committee, it was decided that I should undertake the design, and in 1916-17 I prepared a complete set of working drawings of my design from the first 1/16 scale sketch to the last F. S. detail. In actual fact Webb and Newton did not see the drawings till they were signed by us, and by Lord Plymouth, Lord Selborne and Harcourt on July 24, 1917. The designs of the south-east and south-west corners of Piccadilly Circus at the top of lower Regent Street were designed by me in 1918, and the rebuilding of the Quadrant with the exception of the Piccadilly Hotel was begun in April 1923. My design included the whole of the Quadrant (except the Piccadilly Hotel), the County Fire Office, the return façade in Piccadilly up to the Hotel, and the buildings at the top of Lower Regent Street on both sides of the Street.

My solution of the problem was to treat Shaw's building as the centre of one great composition, extending from Vigo Street to Piccadilly Circus on the south side, with plain curtain façades east and west of the hotel, and pavilions at either end, with a suggestion of a return to Shaw's design in the Ionic columns. I dispensed with his rustication blocks, and substituted wide rectangular shop fronts in place of his heavily rusticated arches. Shaw had always intended the great archways over Air Street, and

I first of all tried to repeat his Ionic columns above the arches. I found, however, that in spite of the massiveness of the arch, these columns would give the impression of crushing the haunches of the arch, and making it erupt between the columns. I therefore introduced a pedestal course, and a Roman Doric column of the same diameter as Shaw's Ionic, and though it was a dangerous venture to introduce two different orders under one entablature, I came to the conclusion that the whole design was so unorthodox that it did not really matter, and by this means I got the appearance of solidity which was far more important in the design than strictly accurate grammar.

The curious thing is that though I had every intention of being loyal to Shaw's design, by the time I had got round the corner into Piccadilly, the design had completely changed its character. When I got to Air Street I found Shaw had not left enough room to finish his great roof with an unbroken ridge line, and I had to carry the upper part of the building farther south in order to allow for this without blocking the windows of the hotel. This is the explanation of the semicircular arch high up over the colonnade above Air Street on the south side. In the Quadrant, for some reason known only to itself, the Crown had, in setting out the plan, ended the south curve with a straight line, instead of letting the curve run itself out as it ought to have done; and the Crown also failed me in the iron grilles in front of the mezzanine floors. I wanted to use a good deal of gilding here in the French manner of the eighteenth century, in order to cheer up the street, but no provision for this had been made in the Crown leases, and the tradesmen, in view of the very high rents they had to pay, not unnaturally declined to spend a penny more than they could help. Indeed, on the one bit of gilding that survived, I think some of them must have used gold paint instead of best gold leaf. Shaw had not very seriously considered the design of the County Fire Office, so here I went off on my own. The site is triangular, coming to an acute angle next Glasshouse Street, and as it was impossible to make

any satisfactory treatment of the big roof at this front, I stopped the roof short of it and designed the dome with its copper roof. The County Fire Office asked to have their figure of Britannia repeated in the new building, and a new model for this was made and carried out by Herman Cawthra.

My only regret about the Quadrant is that the rebuilding was carried out in stone rather than in brick with a sparing use of stone. Brick, not stone, is the natural material for London, which is miles away from any possible quarry, and it would have been possible to produce a far more interesting design and one more characteristic of London. Also it is a very great pity that the Crown did not have the courage of its convictions, and deal with the whole of Regent Street as it had dealt with the Quadrant, instead of leaving it open to miscellaneous design.

I had now completed the design of nearly half of Piccadilly Circus and meditated the completion of the Circus following the lines of this design, but the Crown property stops at Glasshouse Street; the ground to the east of that is controlled by the L.C.C., and the London Pavilion held an unexpired lease with, as I understood, some fifteen years to run.<sup>1</sup> I did nothing, therefore, till 1929-30, when I took the matter up again, and worked out a scheme for the transformation of the Circus into a large oblong Place, cutting off the corner on the north side of Shaftesbury Avenue, with new façades on the Pavilion site facing Swan and Edgar, and on the Criterion site facing north. I was able to get a symmetrical design and a greatly enlarged "place" instead of the ridiculous plan of the present Circus. I approached the L.C.C. and suggested that this design should be retained for reference whenever the opportunity occurred for completing the Circus. *The Times* in a leading article urged that as I had already designed a considerable part of the Circus successfully, it would be desirable that I should be called on to design the re-

<sup>1</sup> In this I was mistaken, as only recently I have learnt that the Pavilion lease does not terminate till 1962.

mainder, and at first the L.C.C. seemed disposed to entertain my proposal, but later on they declined to do so. If, as I am now informed is the case, the Pavilion lease has still some thirty years to run their action is intelligible, though I think unwise, in view of what London has suffered through lack of foresight, but I cannot understand why, when it must have been perfectly well known that the leases of Crown property in Piccadilly Circus would expire at a definite date, and the property be rebuilt, this date was not taken into consideration by the L.C.C. when they granted the lease of the London Pavilion. Nobody seems to have thought of this, and the result is that for another thirty odd years, it will be impossible to remove the abominable eyesore of the projecting corner of Shaftesbury Avenue, with its dreadful architecture and its illuminated signs of Club Cigarettes, Bovril, Somebody's Port and Somebody Else's Stout. Piccadilly Circus is perhaps the most famous place of its kind in the world; a serious effort had been made by the Crown to rebuild the property under its control in a manner worthy of its importance, but owing to the utter lack of foresight of the municipal authorities, the public is doomed to suffer for another thirty years or more a state of things which is a disgrace to any civilized country. Quite recently, when the Shaftesbury Memorial was replaced, I suggested that some consideration should be given to the ultimate completion of Piccadilly Circus, but my suggestion passed unheeded, and the Memorial has been replaced on a site which has no architectural relevance to anything, and appears to have been dictated solely by the supposed requirements of traffic. So far as the Memorial is concerned, it is done for. It has been piled up on an ill-proportioned flight of steps, on so narrow an area that the water will probably be a nuisance if allowed to play, and owing to the height of the base above the street nobody will realize that the Memorial was actually intended to be a fountain. In the beautiful fountains of Italy one of the essential elements of the design was always a spacious basin kept low down in order that

people might see the water with its sparkle and ever-changing lights and reflections. The authorities seem to have been wholly unconscious of this, and both in what they have done here, and in their contemptuous indifference to the amenities of Piccadilly Circus, they have left for future generations a monument of municipal muddling and ineptitude.

Another instance of this lack of vision is the layout of Horseferry Road, in connection with the new Lambeth Bridge. In order to avoid interference with the approach to Lambeth Palace, the axis line of the new bridge had to be swung slightly to the south-west, but when Horseferry Road was widened nobody seems to have thought it worth while to continue the axis line of the bridge along the Horseferry Road, with the result that, as seen from the bridge, the Imperial Chemical Industries Buildings are set askew to the bridge, the road leaves the Bridge Place at an oblique angle, and the Tower of the R.C. Cathedral, which might have given a fine ending to the vista looking north from the centre of the Bridge, is away to one side. Our municipal authorities congratulate themselves on looking a hundred years ahead; it would be more to the purpose if, in the costly undertakings committed to their charge, they extended their survey beyond a few hundred yards.

## CHAPTER XX

The City Churches—The Enabling Act—The Phillimore Commission—Letters in *The Times*—Measure carried in the House of Lords—Opposition of the City: Defeat of the Measure.

I AM coming to the end of my memoirs, and I will end them with an account of three strenuous fights in what I believed to be a good cause—the saving of the City churches, the heading off of a waste of some twelve to fifteen million pounds on two disastrous schemes for a bridge at Charing Cross, and the attempt to save Waterloo Bridge.

The problem of providing new churches to meet a rapidly growing population had been a serious one since the beginning of the last century. In 1815 St. Pancras had a population of 40,000 and seating in the churches for 6000, most of the seats being proprietary. In 1818 Parliament voted one million pounds<sup>1</sup> for church - building throughout the country, followed by another half million in 1819, and by 1824, 212 new churches had been built; but the number of churches in existence was still wholly inadequate, and in 1835 the Ecclesiastical Commission reported that in four parishes in London, with a population of 166,000, there was church room for only 8200. In April of that year C. J. Blomfield, who had become Bishop of London in 1828, issued his appeal to Churchmen for the creation of a fund to be applied to the building and endowment of additional churches in the Metropolis, and he himself subscribed £2000. This was the origin of what

<sup>1</sup> See Mathieson, *English Church Reform*, 1836–1840, p. 128. St. Pancras Church, designed by Inwood and completed in 1822, was one of the churches erected under an Act passed in 1816.



is now called the Bishop of London's Fund, and I find in the *Memoir of Bishop Blomfield*, by his son, that every year the Bishop set aside one-third of his income to be given away,<sup>1</sup> most of it in connection with church purposes. As the average income of the See of London was then some £15,000 to £16,000 a year, this meant that he had given away not much less than £150,000, and it will be noted that he relied on voluntary gifts and subscriptions, not on dispossession by Act of Parliament.

In 1899 a Commission appointed by the Bishop of London recommended the removal of ten churches, but only three of these had been destroyed prior to 1919. In that year an important Measure was passed by Parliament—The Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act, now famous as "The Enabling Act".<sup>2</sup> By this Act the text of any Measure is determined wholly and exclusively by the Church Assembly. There is nowhere any power to amend it; the Measure must either become an Act in the terms in which it leaves the Church Assembly or it must drop; any Measures taken under this Act must be confined to matters concerning the Church of England, but when such Measure is brought before the Houses of Parliament for confirmation, no criticism in Parliament is allowed, nor is any provision made for taking evidence, and the danger is that the wide powers conferred on the Assembly, solely for Church matters, might be misused to the detriment of the Subject. It is evident that the Ecclesiastical party meant to use these powers to get hold of the City churches. The sites of those churches are immensely valuable, and it was contended that the churches were not pulling their weight, a disingenuous argument based on small attendances at Sunday services, though it was known that these churches were constantly used as places of rest and prayer during the week.

<sup>1</sup> See *Memoir of Bishop Blomfield*, by Alfred Blomfield, Bishop of Colchester, vol. ii. p. 207.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Times* for November 10, 1926, for a lucid statement of the provisions of this Act and their significance, by Lord Wrenbury.

The passing of the Enabling Act let loose the pack in full cry. A Commission was appointed in March 1919 to enquire into circumstances connected with the City churches—their possible regrouping with or without the demolition of churches, and to report with recommendations. The Commission held twenty sittings and, among other things, recommended the demolition of no less than nineteen churches. With the exception of six, all these churches were by Wren. St. Mary Woolnoth is one of the remaining six; it was designed by Nicholas Hawksmoor, and built under the Act of 1708, “for building fifty new Churches”, and is in its way one of the most remarkable churches in London. All Hallows, London Wall, is by young Dance, the Architect of old Newgate. St. Botolph’s, Aldgate, was designed by the elder Dance. St. Magnus the Martyr, St. Nicholas, Cole Abbey and St. Vedast are characteristic examples of Wren at his best. The Commission stated that they had “gone carefully into the question of the architectural merits, the historical associations and the topographical advantages of the several churches, and we have come to the conclusion that those named in the list might well be removed”. When one studies the names of the members of this Commission,<sup>1</sup> one cannot find any one of them who was known to have any knowledge of what was or was not “architectural merit”, and the Commission does not appear to have consulted any architect on the subject except the Surveyor to St. Paul’s and the Architect of the L.C.C.

<sup>1</sup> The Commission consisted of Lord Phillimore (Chairman), Bishop Browne, Archdeacon Holmes, Lord Hugh Cecil, Sir William Collins, Sir Charles Wakefield, Sir Rowland Blades, Mr. A. F. Buxton, The Hon. Herbert Gibbs, Sir Francis Green and Sir Lulham Pound. Sir Charles Wakefield was unable to serve, Lord Hugh Cecil and Sir William Collins dissented. Lord Hugh disliked the proposed demolitions and thought that a greater effort should be made to raise funds in the localities when new churches were desired, that the work should be done gradually and on a less ambitious scale. Sir William Collins declined to concur in the recommendation to remove so many of the churches, and objected to “assigning to yet another authority of recent origin and non-statutory nature”, duties which were already being discharged by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the City Parochial Foundation.

The Commissioners said themselves that they only heard the evidence of any Incumbents "who wished for an interview, *when this wish and our view that the particular church might be removed coincided*". With the honourable exception of Lord Hugh Cecil and Sir William Collins, the Commission were out for blood, and damn the consequences. They estimated that the net total gain would be some £1,695,000, but that it might possibly be a good deal more. They attached to their report a very neat little map (Appendix B) in which the churches to be preserved are marked in red, those in which the tower only was to be kept in black with a red dot, and those to be destroyed altogether (twelve) with a black dot. I have the map before me as I write, and what amazes me is that any body of educated Englishmen could have set their hands to such a document, a document that showed not only a callous indifference to the claims of local associations, history and architecture, but, as was shown by the result, a complete misreading of the character of their countrymen. There was no reference in the report to the religious significance of these churches and their time-honoured associations. That part of the report which dealt with the demolition of the nineteen churches and their potential value might have been drafted by any Valuer or Estate Agent.

In June 1920 conferences were held at the Royal Academy, with Sir Aston Webb in the chair, attended by representatives of the Academy, the National Trust, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Antiquaries, the R.I.B.A., the Victoria and Albert Museum, the London Society, the City Churches Preservation Society and others, and in July 1920 a protest was sent to the Bishop of London stating arguments against the proposals of the Commission:

We desire to protest emphatically against the destruction of the 19 Churches scheduled by the Commission. We notice that the Commissioners used the phrase that "due reverence" should be observed in devoting some of these sacred buildings to secular uses. We would venture to say that to recommend the

destruction of any one of them can hardly conduce to their reverent treatment.

I do not recollect who was responsible for this well-placed kick. The Bishop replied with dignity, but not till seven months later (February 16, 1921), that, though he hated removing any old church, he could not "shut his eyes to the pressing question of the poverty of the Clergy" and the lack of churches.

Meanwhile, the Church Assembly was steadily proceeding with the details of its scheme. By midsummer 1924 these were practically completed, and in July of that year I was desired by the Academy Conference to write to Lord Hugh Cecil in reference to the Union of Benefices and Disposal of Churches Measure, 1924. I explained our objections to the Measure and said that the Conference suggested that a clause should be inserted providing that in all cases of proposed demolition, before any action was taken, the Royal Commission of Fine Arts or the Board of Ancient Monuments should be consulted as to the artistic value of the building, and if in the opinion of the body referred to the building should be preserved on account of its artistic value, no further action should be taken. Lord Hugh replied very courteously that he did not think the Assembly would raise any objection to the Board of Ancient Monuments or the Commission of Fine Arts reporting to the Metropolitan Benefices Board, and he did not doubt that even without the proposed clause "the Metropolitan Board would listen with great respect to any representation that responsible bodies representing artistic opinion might lay before the Board".<sup>1</sup> This, however, evaded our point. We wanted something more than "respect". What we wanted was that some competent non-ecclesiastical body should have the power to veto demolitions if it thought it necessary to do so. On August 5 I wrote to Lord Hugh on behalf of the Conference that "in making this

<sup>1</sup> Letter to me from Lord Hugh, July 30, 1924. It appeared that Lord Hugh had never heard of the Royal Fine Art Commission, but as it was only appointed in May 1924, this was not to be wondered at.

proposal we are making a compromise on our original position . . . in the hope that a solution of the difficulty may be found on some such lines as these”.

On October 22, Lord Hugh wrote that the (Church) Committee did not see their way to consenting to a veto being given to the Ancient Monuments Board; as for the Royal Fine Arts Commission he admitted that he knew nothing about it. A week later he sent me a copy of the Measure as amended, and I again had to point out that the amendment did not meet our point. On November 1 Lord Hugh wrote that “we must claim that in the last resort the Church has a right over its own property and may neglect even considerations of art”. We contended that the churches, having been built out of the proceeds of a Coal-tax, could not be regarded as the private property of the Church, and I replied that I recognized that “a real effort had been made to meet our suggestion, though I fear it is not enough”. Lord Hugh wrote on November 17, “I appreciate your considerate and kindly tone, but I am afraid it is impossible for us to do what you wish”—and so we went on with the utmost courtesy and utterly at cross purposes, and after consulting with the Conference I replied to Lord Hugh:

You will note that the Conference has gone a long way from its original position in its anxiety to reach a reasonable compromise. I fear the limit has now been reached, and if the (Church) Assembly does not see its way to agreeing to our proposals, we should have no alternative to fighting the Measure for all we are worth. I still hope your sagacity will find a way out.

The buttons were now off the foils. On the actual day on which I wrote to Lord Hugh, the Union of Benefices and Disposal of Churches (Metropolis) Measure, 1924, was moved by the Bishop of London in the Church Assembly, seconded by Sir Lulham Pound (a member of the 1919 Commission), and carried with only two or three dissentients. Webb wrote to me on November 24, 1924: “What a wonderful man you are, reeling out these carefully con-

sidered addresses<sup>1</sup> and letters at the rate you do. The City Churches must now be fought in Parliament." Mr. Powys, the Secretary of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, had already written to me on behalf of the Society:

"Thank you very warmly for the work you have done on behalf of the City Churches . . . it feels that without the firm stand you have made to protect these buildings, we should not have been able to do nearly so well. My Committee wishes me to express its deep-felt gratitude for your work in this regard.

The fight had now come out into the open. On November 21, 1924, I wrote a long letter to *The Times* which occupied rather more than one column of the leader page, and this was reinforced by a leading article in the same number. The help of *The Times* was invaluable throughout the whole controversy. In my letter I pointed out that those who cared for our City churches were concerned only with that part of the Measure which dealt with the "pulling down or removal of any Church and the sale or disposal of its site". I described the procedure and pointed out that "the destruction of City Churches, which so far has proceeded in a somewhat casual manner, will, if this Measure be passed, be regularized and a very dangerous principle formally recognized", and that if the Ecclesiastical authorities were to be authorized "to regard those Churches as property to be dealt with at their own discretion, this assumption, pushed to its logical extreme, would place at their disposal Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral". I described the negotiations with Lord Hugh Cecil, and said that whereas the Bishop of London had expressed his surprise at his own moderation, we held that if the Measure was passed,

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<sup>1</sup> I had sent Webb a copy of an address entitled "Off the Track" which I had given in the Birmingham and Midland Institute in June 1924. There were about 1200 people present, and the acoustic properties of the hall are bad. I pitched my voice at the point I was advised to, but after about ten minutes some old gentleman in the gallery shouted out that he could not hear a word I was saying. However, I pacified him by shouting at the top of my voice.

a machinery will be provided which in unwise or unscrupulous hands might lead to disastrous results, and would mean that the life of no Church would be safe, since their fate would pass into the hands of a body, whose principal *raison d'être* is their demolition. . . . They should be sacrificed only after the fullest and most careful enquiry, and on the best advice obtainable as to their artistic and historical value. The Measure as it stands does not provide this.

The letter was uncompromising, but plain speech was now necessary, and *The Times* reinforced my letter with a strong leading article headed "The City Churches" which began:

"The Ecclesiastical grip", says Sir Reginald Blomfield in a letter to us this morning, "seems to be tightening": [and went on to say:] The Measure goes to Parliament frankly as a means of destroying Churches, and not for preserving them, and everything in it is heavily weighted in favour of clerical opinion . . . under the new machinery hardly any of them (the Churches) will be safe. Against a determined attack they might go down like so many ninepins.

I wrote another letter to *The Times* in December 1924. Lord Hugh had suggested that we had "profoundly misunderstood" the Measure, and that in fact it would be much more difficult to destroy a church than it was before. I pointed out that this might or might not be, but "We are asked to accept possibilities and probabilities and to many of us the risk seems too great", and that the "wise, moderate and broad-minded men" of the Phillimore Commission and the Metropolitan Churches Committee had not hesitated to recommend the destruction of "19 City Churches out of a surviving total of 47. *Heu pietas, heu prisca fides.*"

In March 1925 another Conference was held at the Royal Academy attended by the representatives of all the different bodies who had attended the earlier conferences. Dicksee, who had succeeded Webb as P.R.A., was in the chair, and at this Conference I brought forward a draft petition to the Ecclesiastical Committee of the Houses of Parliament, which was adopted by the Conference as

drafted by me, except that Dicksee altered the concluding paragraph. In my draft, which is dated February 23, 1925, with a note "subject to legal embellishments", I had ended with a formal petition to the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament to reject the Measure. For some unknown reason, instead of being sent in as a formal petition from the Conference, Dicksee sent it in as a personal communication, with an assurance that the Conference had given "very earnest consideration" to the Measure and hoped that the Ecclesiastical Committee would give their "most careful attention to the objections made by the Conference"—a characteristic interference which just took the edge off the protest.

As this document summarizes the objection to the Measure, I give it in full as drafted by me and approved by the Conference, except for the alteration in the last paragraph:

On behalf of the under-mentioned Institutions and Societies, we humbly petition the Ecclesiastical Committee of the Houses of Parliament to reject the Union of Benefices and Disposal of Churches (Metropolitan) Measure, 1924.

Not only does this Measure suppress existing rights of control, and treat as Church property buildings which were provided out of the proceeds of taxation and by voluntary gifts, but it legalizes machinery for the demolition of buildings which are of inestimable value on historical and architectural grounds.

As the result of several conferences, strong appeals to alter the Measure were made to the National Assembly of the Church of England by the Institutions and Societies named in the list appended to this petition, but the Measure was passed by the Assembly with modifications so slight as to be practically useless, and the extent to which in practice the demolition of Churches might go is shown by the Report of the Phillimore Commission appointed by the Bishop of London in 1919. This Commission dealt with 47 Churches within the City, and stated in the Report that 19 of these Churches "might well be removed". Among the 19 were 13 Churches designed by Wren, one by Inigo Jones and Wren, one by Hawksmoor, one by Dance who designed the Mansion House, and one by his son.



We submit that the City Churches are unique both historically, in regard to the circumstances under which they were built and their intimate association with the City of London,—and architecturally in regard to their design; that as such they are regarded with affection, not only by the inhabitants of London, but by all the English-speaking race, and that they should be held as an inalienable trust for future generations.

The proposed Measure introduces the principle that it is within the power of the Ecclesiastical Authorities to treat these buildings as the property of the Church, to be dealt with as they and their advisers may think fit. We submit that if such a principle is established, no Church will in fact be safe in the future. The Benefices Board, with whom will rest the final decision as to the treatment of any Church, has an overwhelming majority of ecclesiastical members. The Commission of five, appointed by the Bishop to enquire into schemes of disposal, only provides for one layman. The Bishop, if defeated in his first proposal for demolition and sale, can renew the attempt at the end of five years and the provision for expert artistic and historical control is wholly inadequate. For these reasons we pray the Ecclesiastical Committee of both Houses of Parliament to reject the Measure and your petitioners will ever pray.

On behalf of the following Institutions and Societies:

The Royal Academy of Arts  
The Royal Institute of British Architects  
The Society of Antiquaries  
The Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings  
The City Churches Preservation Society  
The Central Committee for the Preservation of Churches  
The National Trust  
The London Society  
The London Survey Committee  
The British Archaeological Association  
The Metropolitan Public Gardens Association

*February 23rd, 1925.*

Subject to legal embellishments.

R. B.

A most valuable ally in our support now appeared in the City. In 1925 a Special Committee of the Corporation set to work on the Measure and formulated its objections, and added the finishing touch to what *The Times* described in July 1926 as "as swift a storm of protest as has ever been provoked by a responsible report",<sup>1</sup> for the Corporation were determined to fight the Measure even at the Bar of the House. As *The Times* said:

Public opinion, which has every sympathy with the desire of the Church to improve its financial position, and to erect Churches where they may be needed in the suburbs, is in this matter wholly on the side of the Corporation . . . for this is a National question, and must be decided by the Nation's representatives.<sup>2</sup>

Early in 1926 the Corporation had presented a petition against the Measure to the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament. This petition failed, but the Corporation returned to the attack, and drew up a further statement of their objections, this time addressed to Parliament itself. One would have thought that this continuous and very serious opposition to the Measure might have made the Church Assembly pause, but with its customary misreading of the temper of the public it went on its way without turning a hair. "The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart", and on July 15, 1926, the Bishop of London moved the adoption of the Measure in the House of Lords, and endeavoured to show that so far as the Churches were concerned it was really harmless. Lord Crawford made an admirable speech opposing the Measure, Lord Selborne tried to limit the discussion to the financial necessities of the Church and on the motion of Lord Banbury the debate was adjourned.

At the resumed discussion on July 20, Lords Banbury, Hanworth and Peel opposed the Measure, Lord Middleton supported it and Lord Knutsford, who was apt to make sweeping statements in support of any cause that he had

<sup>1</sup> The Report of the Phillimore Commission of 1919.

<sup>2</sup> *The Times*, July 15, 1926.

at heart, made the outrageous assertion that "the only *raison d'être* (of the City Churches) was to support absentee Incumbents". Lord Phillimore, who had been Chairman of the Commission that made the deplorable report of 1919, rather meanly attempted to throw the responsibility for the Measure on to Lord Hugh Cecil. The late Archbishop of Canterbury said, "Their Lordships would be taking grave responsibility if they withheld (from the Church) . . . vast funds which were now locked up in the City of London". The late Archbishop carried great weight in the House, and it was probably his influence that carried the Measure by 71 votes to 54. He was no doubt in a difficult position, but I have always been surprised that a man of his sagacity and watchfulness should have misread the feeling of the public and committed himself so far.

The final struggle was to follow in the House of Commons. Lord Wrenbury's very important letter on the constitutional aspect of the Enabling Act appeared in *The Times* of November 10, and on November 25, 1926, the Union of Benefices and Disposal of Churches (Metropolis) Measure came before the House of Commons for the sanction of Parliament, just two years after it had received the almost unanimous approval of the Church Assembly.<sup>1</sup> *The Times* in a long leading article described the results of the Measure if passed by the House of Commons, and concluded the article with these serious words:

These City Churches, because of their unique beauty and the genius of the men who built them, are the possession of the City of London and of England, without a rival in any country of the world. . . . The ground on which they stand is holy ground. To barter it for money would be an act unworthy alike of the traditions of the past and of the hope and faith of the future.

In this sentence the writer hinted at a point which might have been insisted on more strongly by the opponents of

<sup>1</sup> November 18, 1924.

the Measure, and that is the lack of faith and imagination in its advocates. Instead of working patiently towards a great ideal, the Ecclesiastical Authorities were trying to rush it by a short cut.

*The Times* of November 26 reported: "The House was nearly full when Lord Hugh Cecil rose to move the presentation for Royal assent for what has come to be known as the City Churches Measure". He did his best to show that it was harmless, but he was met quite firmly by Sir Vansittart Bowater and others on behalf of the City, and the Measure was defeated by 124 votes to 27. The man on the other side whom I really respected was Lord Hugh Cecil. He had dissented from Lord Phillimore's report in 1919. He had made a genuine effort to meet our objections, and from first to last he had conducted the controversy with the fine courtesy of a sincere and honourable gentleman. Also I could not help feeling sympathy with the Bishop in his anxiety to meet the spiritual needs of his diocese, but in my opinion the Church Assembly went the wrong way to work. It should have taken the advice given by Lord Hugh when he dissented from the Phillimore report, and it should not have made the futile attempt that it did to ride rough-shod over the sensibilities of people quite as capable of forming a right judgement as the members of the Church Assembly.

So ended the seven years' war of the City Churches Measure. The kick of the Pope's mule had got home at last.<sup>1</sup> Lord Phillimore's report, and the high-handed raid on the City churches which had gained the almost unanimous approval of the Church Assembly, had ended in the humiliating defeat of that body. Most English people rule their lives by that excellent precept "Live and let live", but it seems that the Church Assembly is incapable of learning that lesson, and of realizing the wisdom of leaving well alone.

<sup>1</sup> See *Lettres de mon Moulin*, by Alphonse Daudet. The Pope's mule got home on its enemy after waiting seven years.

## CHAPTER XXI

Charing Cross Bridge, 1916—Subsidence of Piers in Waterloo Bridge—Petition of 1926—Commission on Cross River Traffic—L.C.C. Scheme for Bridge at Charing Cross, 1929—Rejection in 1930—The Advisory Committee: Second Scheme rejected, 1931—L.C.C. decide to destroy Waterloo Bridge—Lambeth Bridge—Conclusion.

I was ever a fighter, so one fight more—  
The best and the last.

So Browning wrote, but I was nothing of the soft, being, as I always assure my friends, the most placable of men. One's views do not always square with those of other people, and when the point at issue is serious it is best to have it out one way or the other. The next difference of opinion was over the proposed bridge at Charing Cross, and it was a very serious difference. The bridge had been talked about for twenty-five years or more, but nothing happened, and in 1916 John Burns, Aston Webb and I thought that the time had come to move, and I wrote three articles in the *Observer* signed at my own request by Burns, Webb and myself. The South-Eastern Railway Company had asked for power to strengthen their bridge. We suggested that the more money spent on the bridge, the greater would be the difficulty of removing it, if the Station was ever moved across the river and a new roadway bridge built at Charing Cross. We called poor old Hungerford Bridge all sorts of names, as was the custom at the time. John Burns was very fond of his own particular description—“That ugly red oxide behemoth which sprawls from north to south”.<sup>1</sup> We sketched out proposals for a high-level bridge further to the east of the station,

<sup>1</sup> In actual fact it is more nearly east and west.

with a roadway 1100 yards long running in an uninterrupted straight line from St. Martin's Church to the junction of Waterloo Road with York Road and Stamford Street. This would undoubtedly have given a very fine vista both ways, but there was a fatal objection at the north end, that St. Martin's Church blocked the exit of traffic, however fine it might look at the end of the vista. I have been told that, when the L.C.C. were discussing the Charing Cross Bridge, the removal of St. Martin's Church elsewhere was suggested as a possible solution of the traffic problem—anything for a clear field, whether it was St. Martin's Church or Waterloo Bridge, and why not St. Paul's Cathedral too, while you are about it? We suggested that the site for the Station and Hotel, of an area of 820 ft. by 750 ft., should be on the west side of the new roadway,<sup>1</sup> where the existing lines could enter the Station without any alteration, and that the triangular space bounded by the new roadway on the west, Waterloo Road on the east and the river on the north should be left as an open "Place" with an uninterrupted view over the river, which would have been of inestimable value as a breathing-space for Lambeth. The scheme was a bold one, but there would have been many difficulties in the way, and in those days, sixteen years ago, we had little idea of the growing requirements of the Ministry of Transport, who now insist on a minimum length of 150 ft. of curb between the entrances of any two streets into a "Place". The suggestion was headed off by vague estimates of the cost, and throughout all this controversy figures based on unascertainable data have been tossed about by the authorities, just as suited their purpose at the time. If the scheme was one they liked, the estimates were favourable; if it was not, the estimates were against it. For quite intelligible reasons the L.C.C. valuers gave no particulars as to how their estimates were reached, but this made it almost impossible

<sup>1</sup> This suggestion was repeated when the Advisory Committee of 1930 was endeavouring to arrive at an agreed scheme for a bridge at Charing Cross.

for outsiders to check the estimates. There was always something waiting round the corner to trip one up.

Meanwhile, Waterloo Bridge had for some time been showing signs of subsidence. In October 1923 a serious movement in No. 4 pier, counting from the Lambeth shore, was observed. The scour of the river had swept away the gravel round the piles on which the piers stand, and in November 1923 an attempt was made by the L.C.C. to arrest this movement by blowing cement into the gravel under forced pressure from above. The Engineers blew with such fervour that they disintegrated the gravel round the piles, the loose gravel was swept away and the pier proceeded to settle further at a most alarming rate—8 in. in a few days.<sup>1</sup> The mischief having now been done, the work was stopped, and no movement that cannot perfectly well be dealt with by underpinning and partial rebuilding has taken place since. A temporary bridge was built in 1924-5, and finally, in 1926, the L.C.C. decided that the existing bridge should be removed and a new six-line bridge of not more than five arches built in its place. The L.C.C., it is true, had at first been willing to widen the bridge as it stood, but the Port of London had objected on the ground that the increased length of the piers would obstruct barges swinging round this awkward curve. The subsequent decision of the L.C.C. to destroy the bridge rather suggests the action of a doctor who, having first half-murdered his patient, decides to hide all trace of his incapacity by finishing him off. The bridge now appeared to be doomed. Although I had done all I could to help in saving the bridge, I had given up hope, and when the L.C.C. announced that an open competition would be held for the new bridge, I was on the point of accepting the invitation I had received to act as one of the Assessors, when my old friend, D. S. MacColl, wrote to me that it would be "a blot on my escutcheon" if I gave up hope while there was still a chance of saving the bridge. He himself was working up a petition to save the bridge, which

<sup>1</sup> See *Report of Royal Commission on Cross River Traffic in London*, p. 25.

was being supported by most of the best men in the country, and on hearing this, I wrote to the Clerk to the L.C.C. declining the invitation to act as Assessor on the ground that the bridge might yet be saved. The competition was dropped, and as the result of the petition<sup>1</sup> Mr. Baldwin appointed the Royal Commission on Cross River Traffic in London.

Meanwhile it had been recognized that the new bridge at Charing Cross was the only way to relieve the congestion of traffic over Waterloo Bridge, but it had also already become clear that the cost of it would be enormous, somewhere about £15,000,000 it was estimated. It seemed to me that this was out of the question, and as the great cost was largely due to the assumed necessity of moving the Station across the river, I came to the conclusion that the only thing to do was to cut the knot and build the new bridge and roadway clear of the Station altogether.

In March 1925, in a long letter to *The Times*, I pointed out that we had reached an impasse in this matter of bridges; a new bridge at Charing Cross was undoubtedly necessary.

So far [I said], the campaign in favour of such a bridge has been based on the assumption that it must involve the demolition of the Railway Bridge and the building of a new Station on the other side of the river, and some years ago, in association with Mr. John Burns and Sir Aston Webb, I wrote in the *Observer* advocating this gigantic scheme. Experience since that date shows that this assumption simply blocks the possibility of any progress and that the time has come to give up the idea of building on the site of the Railway Bridge and Station.

• On April 30, 1926, Sir Henry Maybury made proposals for a new bridge, with a road rising to cross the Strand with

<sup>1</sup> The petition was addressed to the Prime Minister on June 4, 1926, and bore 156 names, including those of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Duke of Wellington, Lords Hugh Cecil, Chelmsford, Crewe, Darling, Haig, Hanworth, Hartington, Hewart, Jellicoe, Knutsford, Lansdowne, Lascelles, Meath, Revelstoke, Riddell, the Deans of St. Paul's and Westminster, and many well-known artists, scholars and men of letters.



an overbridge, and connecting with Waterloo Bridge Road, at an estimated cost of £5,000,000, and he dismissed as "not within the realm of practical politics proposals to remove Charing Cross Railway Station". I called attention to this in a letter to *The Times* in April, and again on June 14, 1926, pointing out that such a bridge as either Maybury's or mine could be done at a cost "within the region of practical politics", that this would save Waterloo Bridge and the enormous expense of rebuilding the whole of it. The L.C.C. paid no attention to either Maybury's proposal or mine, and made up their minds to have the bridge down. It was only the petition and the appointment of the Royal Commission that saved the situation. The Royal Commission on Cross River Traffic in London was appointed in July 1926—Lord Lee of Farnham (Chairman) with Lord Hambledon, Sir Willoughby Dickinson, Sir William Plender, Sir Lawrence Weaver and Prof. C. S. Inglis, M.Inst.C.E. The terms of reference were "To survey the whole problem of cross-river traffic in London, to report what provisions should be made to meet future requirements, and in particular to consider the proposals made in connection with Waterloo and St. Paul's Bridges". The Commission was desired, "having regard to the urgency of the question", to "report to us at the earliest possible date".

Now the members of this Commission individually were able men, but the Commission did not include a single person who could claim any technical knowledge of traffic, town-planning and architecture, vitally important elements in the problem. How, for instance, could the "whole problem of cross-river traffic in London" be dealt with to any purpose unless it was dealt with as part of a comprehensive scheme of town-planning, and in relation to the main arteries of traffic, not only those already in existence, but those that it might be necessary to form in the future? As to architectural possibilities, as usual this was ignored in the reference, and it was ignored in the proceedings of the Commission, but I do not suppose

that in any country except England this important element in the problems would have been so completely disregarded. The Commission held fifty-three meetings, and took evidence from all sorts of witnesses, sometimes in a rather summary manner, and under the drastic direction of the Chairman completed their labours in record time, for their final report was dated November 30, 1926, just four months after the date of their appointment. The Commission recommended <sup>1</sup>—

(a) That Waterloo Bridge should not be demolished, that the two arches that had failed should be rebuilt, that the remaining piers should be underpinned if it was found necessary, and that the roadway be widened from 27 ft. 6 in. to 35 ft. I prepared a design in November 1926 showing how this could be done.<sup>2</sup>

(b) The Commission advised against the proposed St. Paul's Bridge.

(c) As to Charing Cross they recommended a double-deck steel bridge, with the railway below, and a roadway overhead 60 ft. wide with two footways, each 15 ft., the bridge to be built to the east of the existing Hungerford Bridge, a new Station to be constructed under the new roadway, and the roadway was to cross the Strand with a headway of some 18 ft., and "passing behind St. Martin's Church, reach the ground level in the vicinity of the Cavell statue". When all this had been completed, Hungerford Bridge was to be removed. The Commission estimated the cost of this at £7,500,000.

The suggestion was an ingenious one. It had the great

<sup>1</sup> The Commission also dealt with other bridges and tunnels, but I am only here concerned with their recommendations in regard to Waterloo and Charing Cross bridges.

<sup>2</sup> Appendix 5 in the Report of the Commission. I estimated the cost of the widening only, inclusive of the necessary masonry, at about £150,000. The Commission estimated total cost of all works, including widening, at £860,000. A large-scale model of this was prepared by the L.C.C., and a year or two ago stood on the lower staging of the temporary Waterloo Bridge. This model was to have been submitted to the Royal Fine Art Commission, but though I was shown the model made to my design, the R.F.A.C. was never given the opportunity of inspecting the models.

merit of keeping the Southern Railway terminus on the north side of the river, it avoided interference with the Strand traffic by means of the overhead roadway, and the estimated cost was just about half the cost of the two schemes promoted later on by the L.C.C. On the other hand, it was condemned by the Railway Company as impracticable, owing to insufficient headway in the Station from the rail level to the soffit of the upper deck carrying the road. The roadway gave no access to Waterloo Road except by a roundabout road south of Waterloo Station, and about 750 feet length of the Waterloo Road would have been covered over by a new railway viaduct and the new roadway. The Waterloo Road is the most important thoroughfare in this part of London, and this intolerable tunnel alone would have damned the scheme. There were also difficulties of gradient, and the effect on the scenery of the river of this great barrier of a bridge, considerably higher than the existing Hungerford Bridge, would have been disastrous. The scheme was not accepted, and the recommendation to recondition and widen Waterloo Bridge was left in abeyance till the question of the Charing Cross Bridge was settled.

No further steps were taken, so far as the public were aware, till the autumn of 1929, when the official L.C.C. scheme was sprung on an unsuspecting public. A Thames Bridges Conference had been at work for some time at the Institute under the chairmanship of Mr. Arthur Keen, but it was only in the autumn of 1929 that it succeeded in getting a rough tracing of the L.C.C. scheme, and it was not till the end of November 1929 that it was learnt that the Bill with all details of the scheme was already drafted and would be deposited in Parliament in the following January. I had so far taken little part in the Thames Bridges Conference, but this time I went to the meeting and asked what it was proposed to do, because it was evident to all of us that the scheme was hopelessly bad, in spite of the fact that it had received the approval of Sir Edwin Lutyens, the Consulting Architect of the

• L.C.C. in this matter. Nobody seemed to know what to do, so I told the Conference that there was only one thing to do, and that was for the Institute to send a letter of protest to *The Times* signed by the President. I drafted that letter, and Bannister Fletcher, the President of the R.I.B.A., approved and signed it. On December 23 representatives of the R.I.B.A., of the London Society and the Thames Bridges Conference attended a meeting at the Ministry of Transport and stated their objections to the official scheme. I summarized these later under five heads: (1) the enormous cost, (2) failure to deal with the traffic, (3) its utter inadequacy in reference to the architectural possibilities, (4) its sacrifice of the Surrey side, and (5) the serious and permanent inconvenience to the public that would be caused by moving the Station across the river.

The only remark of the Minister at that meeting, that I recollect, is that he was an old L.C.C. man himself, and was not disposed to see his old friends let down. The official report of this interview was not issued by the authorities till nearly three weeks after the date of the meeting, and in the Report the Ministry of Transport and the L.C.C. announced that they were going on with their Bill, and were only prepared to receive suggestions in detail within the limits of the scheme as deposited, which of course meant nothing at all, as in the opinion of the objectors the whole conception of the scheme was radically wrong. It was a hand-to-mouth scheme, full of petty expedients, and bad at that.

When the Bill came before the House an incident occurred which ought, I think, to be put in its proper light. Mr. Keen, the Chairman of the Thames Bridges Conference, had written to Sir Edwin Lutyens pointing out that as the L.C.C. scheme was condemned by *The Times* and by all who had studied it, he might think it desirable to publish a few lines, stating that, in all essentials, the layout had been settled without reference to him. The Minister of Transport referred to this letter in the House, and suggested that it was typical of the unfair opposition

with which the Promoters of the Bill had to contend, though in fact the letter was a perfectly innocent letter only intended by the writer as a friendly suggestion to a colleague. As a result the Bill passed the second reading and was transferred to a Select Committee presided over by Sir Henry Cautley. The Committee sat from March 25 to May 6, 1930, and the Bill was rejected. Sir Lynden Macassey, Counsel for the L.C.C., stated that the scheme submitted was the only scheme for a new road bridge at Charing Cross which the L.C.C. would submit, and that it was for the Committee to accept or reject it, to which Sir Henry Cautley replied, "It is rejected".

In June 1930 the L.C.C. appointed an Advisory Committee "for the purpose of preparing and submitting to the Council an agreed scheme for a road bridge and approaches at Charing Cross", the Committee to consist of "representatives of all authorities and societies concerned".<sup>1</sup> The estimated cost of the scheme was not to exceed £12,500,000, and the scheme was to be submitted within nine months. Sir Leslie Scott was Chairman, and Mr. Frank Pick Vice-Chairman. I represented the Royal Academy. We began our labours in October 1930. At the first meeting I was a little late and sat down in the first vacant seat that I saw, and found myself sitting next to a tall, good-looking elderly man who, I found out afterwards, was Sir Herbert Walker, General Manager of the Southern Railway. Some years before, in my ignorance of the facts of the case, I had called the Southern Railway "the old man of the sea", sitting on the shoulders of Sinbad the Sailor in the person of the public, but I had since learnt that the Southern Railway had not the slightest desire to move, and had only been manoeuvred into consenting to do so by the representations of Ministers of Transport that the move was "a national necessity". It was not till the

<sup>1</sup> The L.C.C., the Westminster City Council, Lambeth Borough Council, Southern Railway Co., Underground Companies, Port of London, Royal Fine Art Commission, Royal Academy, R.I.B.A., Institute of Civil Engineers, Surveyors' Institution and Town Planning Institute.

Advisory Committee had sat for some time, and schemes prepared by me and Messrs. Grierson and Trench which left the Station alone had been published, that this assumption that the removal of the Station was "a national necessity" was finally dissipated. Throughout the proceedings Sir Herbert Walker, Brigadier-General the Hon. Everard Baring, Chairman of the Southern Railway, and the two representatives of the Civil Engineers, Messrs. Grierson and Trench, found ourselves working together to keep the Station where it is, and avoid the flagrant waste of money, and the hardship and inconvenience to the public that would result from moving it across the river.

It was part of the duty of the Committee to examine all possible schemes that had been submitted. This we did at great length and in careful detail, including among others my own scheme for a Suspension Bridge on another site clear of the Station. I had long given up the idea of the removal of the Station and the Railway Bridge. In 1925 I had pointed out that the cost of doing so was prohibitive. In the year following Sir Henry Maybury had come to the same conclusion, and I had worked out a scheme of my own for a Suspension Bridge, with a roadway leading in a continuous straight line from a "Place" in the Strand opposite Charing Cross Hospital to another great "Place" at the intersection of Waterloo Road with York Road and Stamford Street. Leslie Scott, the Chairman, who throughout conducted the proceedings with admirable candour and impartiality, invited me to produce my scheme. He gave me the best part of a day to explain it, and at the end asked me if I thought he had given me "a good run for my money". I told him he certainly had, and I fought my scheme tenaciously; but the opposition was too strong. Most of the Committee were so impressed with what they considered the hideousness of the Railway Bridge that their principal object seemed to be to get rid of it at any cost. I told them that, in my opinion as an artist, Westminster Bridge and Blackfriars Bridge were much more objectionable, that the Railway Bridge was an honest piece

of engineering, doing its work without affectation and absurdity, and that a coat of paint would do wonders. As for the proposed Suspension Bridge, it might be a fine thing in itself if well designed. Seen from Westminster Bridge it would be screened by the Railway Bridge, and seen from Waterloo Bridge it would itself screen the existing Railway Bridge which they disliked so much. Moreover, in any case the country was in no position to spend millions in order to meet aesthetic objections, and I believed that my scheme could be carried out for about one-third of the cost of the official scheme both in time and money.

But I was preaching to deaf ears, and meanwhile another scheme had been produced by the officials of the L.C.C. which in the opinion of some of us was even worse than the scheme already rejected by Parliament. This scheme involved, among other things, a covered-in area of about the size of the paved part of Trafalgar Square, under which roads were to cross each other, and over which all trains going in and out of the new Station would pass. This very large area was to have a headway of only about 17 ft. In spite of the obvious faults of this scheme it received a majority support, but a sufficient number of the Committee stood firm in their rejection of it to prevent any possibility of this scheme being submitted to the Council of the L.C.C. as an "agreed scheme". Our report was sent in in March 1931, and in August of that year the Government informed the L.C.C. that in view of the fact that an agreed scheme had not been produced, they must withdraw their offer of a grant of 75 per cent of the cost. The Committee, in fact, from the first was bound to fail. All possible pressure was brought to bear, first to show that any other scheme than the rejected scheme was, in fact, impracticable, and afterwards to carry through the preposterous second scheme which had been produced at the meetings of the Committee. We seemed throughout to be up against a foregone conclusion. Although we all felt that the Chairman had done all in his power to give everyone

a chance, the situation throughout had been extremely difficult, because the official Experts, Engineers and Valuers were, in fact, committed to the official scheme, and it was impossible for any individual member of the Committee to dispute what they said with any chance of success, because the evidence on which their statements were made was not forthcoming. Moreover, as the proceedings went on, the requirements of the Ministry of Transport seemed steadily to increase. About half-way through we learnt for the first time that the Ministry of Transport required not less than 150 feet uninterrupted length of curb between any two streets entering a "Place" or Rond-point. The result was a great increase in the size and cost of such "Places". In the case of my own proposal it added about a couple of millions to the estimated cost. At the same time, I admit that any information asked for was readily supplied, the enquiry was as thorough as it could be under the circumstances of the case, and the temper of our discussions, or rather the complete absence of it, was admirable..

The result of our labours was naturally disappointing to the L.C.C. after the immense amount of trouble they had taken for many years. Yet I think future generations will be thankful that London has been saved from two disastrous mistakes that could never be undone. The possibilities of a bridge and roadway are by no means exhausted. Messrs. Grierson and Trench produced a scheme of a combined road and rail bridge which leaves the station where it is, Mr. Dalrymple Hay has a scheme which does not interfere with the Station, and there is my Suspension Bridge scheme which I still believe to be the only practicable way of dealing with the problem of the Charing Cross Bridge.

The sequel to the rejection of the two L.C.C. schemes would be incredible in any country but England. On the day after the announcement that the Government withdrew their offer of a grant (August 1931), Sir Percy Simmons, the Chairman of the Improvements Committee of



the L.C.C., announced in *The Times* that in consequence of this decision of the Government immediate steps would be taken to pull down Waterloo Bridge and build a new six-line bridge with not more than five arches on the site. *The Times* in a leading article made the following remark on this announcement:

Sir Percy is in so desperate a hurry to enforce his threat that, although the Council is in recess, he proposes without waiting for its reassembling to carry out the preliminary steps on his own authority and initiative. This hasty declaration of his personal intentions, made within an hour or two of the Minister of Transport's statement in the House of Commons, seems almost indecently out of keeping with the dignity of his official position in the Council. The question of the demolition of one of London's proudest monuments demands long and careful consideration. It cannot be settled off-hand in a fit of pique.<sup>1</sup>

It must be borne in mind that, six years before, there had been a complete consensus of all opinion outside the L.C.C. that the bridge should be preserved, reconditioned and widened as recommended by the Cross River Traffic Commission, and the public still supposed that this would be done, but in January 1932 the Chairman of the Improvements Committee announced that it would recommend a new six-line bridge and that the Government would find 60 per cent of the cost. I wrote at once to *The Times* pointing out the disastrous folly of this course, on grounds of traffic, of cost and the loss of the bridge. On February 10, two letters appeared in *The Times* by Messrs. MacColl and Keen, and *The Times* in a leading article endorsed all my points, and said:

The case against the former L.C.C. policy which the Committee are now threatening to revive was not sentimental but practical. As a practical project the building of a new and wider Waterloo Bridge stands condemned.

On March 9, 1932, at the request of Sir Henry Jackson, M.P., Lord Crawford and I addressed the Conservative

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, July 31, 1931.

\* Committee of Transport at the House of Commons, pointing out the objections to the proposed new six-line bridge, and urging the reconditioning and widening of the existing bridge as recommended by the Royal Commission on Cross River Traffic six years before.<sup>1</sup> I had already made a design for the widening of the bridge—which is given in the report of the Cross River Traffic Commission, and when it had been decided by the L.C.C. to widen the existing bridge to four lines and to build a new bridge at Charing Cross, a large model of the bridge as widened to my design was prepared for the L.C.C., in order that it might be submitted to the Royal Fine Art Commission for their consideration and report. This model has never been submitted to the Royal Fine Art Commission, but I saw the model myself, and in my opinion the alteration would not injure the bridge at all. At a short distance it would be scarcely noticeable, and it would preserve the arches as they are with the cutwaters, the pairs of Doric columns on the piers, the balustrades and the cornice. Unfortunately, a somewhat hasty pronouncement had been made by Sir Edwin Lutyens, that any alteration to the bridge would spoil the design, with the corollary that as the bridge had to be widened, the bridge must go. This remark, made I think without full consideration of all the circumstances of the case, was freely quoted and used as an argument for the destruction of the bridge, but in my opinion it has no foundation in fact.

Important memorials praying for the preservation of Waterloo Bridge had been issued in 1926,<sup>2</sup> and when in February 1932 it was announced that the bridge was to be pulled down and replaced by a six-line bridge of five arches, four memorials in defence of the existing bridge appeared in rapid succession. The first was pub-

<sup>1</sup> My address is given in Appendix III.

<sup>2</sup> On June 4, 1926, a memorial was sent to the Prime Minister, which is printed in the report of the Cross River Traffic Commission as an appendix. On June 7 the names of nine well-known French Architects were given in *The Times* in support of the bridge, and a further list of Artists and others followed on June 12, 1926.

lished in *The Times* on March 9, 1932, containing 140 names, the second on April 5 headed by the Duke of Argyll with 52 names, the third from Cambridge University with 151 names on April 9—and the fourth on May 26 with 143 names, from the University of Oxford. Meanwhile MacColl, Mr. Keen and I persevered in our campaign to save the bridge; the L.C.C. lay low and said nothing, but meanwhile Sir Frederic Palmer and Sir Giles Scott had been preparing their design for the new bridge, and on May 25, only a week before the matter came before Parliament, this design was submitted to the Royal Fine Art Commission for their opinion and report. The Commission, after very careful consideration, gave it as their opinion that the design introduced motives alien to the character of Somerset House and would materially injure the combined effect of the bridge, the river, Somerset House and St. Paul's Cathedral. The designers had, in fact, either forgotten all about Somerset House or ignored its existence. On the morning of June 1 *The Times*<sup>1</sup> had one of its excellent leaders putting the case for the preservation of the bridge, and MacColl and I wrote two short letters of last appeal. MacColl ended his letter, "Such are the alternatives before Parliament, on the one side irreplaceable beauty preserved with efficiency and economy, on the other wanton expenditure and a smudge upon our history". I was even more uncompromising and said, "We look to the Government to save the country from an expenditure which it can't afford, to preserve one of the finest monuments in this country, a monument regarded by many with deep affection, and to rescue the L.C.C. itself from an act of desperate and unpardonable vandalism". As the result the Government did nothing of the sort. With the notable exception of Mr. Runciman, members of the Cabinet voted against the amendment; but the situation was saved by the common sense and sound judgement of the House itself.

<sup>1</sup> From the first both *The Times* and the *Morning Post* rendered invaluable help in the defence of the Bridge.

On the evening of June 1, Sir William Davison, in a clear and able speech, moved "that it be an instruction to the Committee on the Bill, that they leave out the provision of money for the demolition of Waterloo Bridge and the erection of a new bridge". Lord Balniel skilfully entangled the Minister of Transport, and Mr. Duff Cooper wound up the debate with a short but admirable speech, in which he stated the essential points of the whole controversy, and also urged Conservatives to conserve something worth conserving. The House then divided, and the figures were: for the amendment 222, against 154—a majority for the amendment, 68. The result was received with loud cheers. It was entirely unexpected; the promoters of the Money Bill without alteration looked for an easy walk over. The Government seems to have agreed with them, and the movers of the amendment never expected anything like such a signal victory. For myself, I regarded this amendment as a last desperate effort which might get support from a handful of independent men, and, on the principle that a battle is never lost till it is won, I had always maintained that there was just a chance of pulling it off, and that that chance, however, slight, was worth going for. The decision of the House on June 1 was remarkable, not only in saving Waterloo Bridge, but also as showing that no matter what the bureaucracy may say we still have in Parliament a final court of appeal that will listen to a good case if it is founded on solid fact and common sense. It is, I think, in this independence of the House, in its capacity for judging important issues apart from their political bearings, that the hope for the future of the country lies. It now remains for the L.C.C. to carry out their original programme by reconditioning and widening Waterloo Bridge, and forming a new bridge at or near Charing Cross, when the resources of the country admit of it, or better still, the Government should take over Waterloo Bridge, do what work is necessary and place its fate beyond dispute by scheduling it as a historical monument.

I must add a word about Lambeth Bridge, which I designed in collaboration with Sir George Humphreys and Mr. Topham Forrest, architect to the L.C.C. The whole of the constructional engineering was designed by Sir George Humphreys and his staff, but very wisely I was called in at an early date to say how the elevations were to be treated. Having regard to the Houses of Parliament on one side and Lambeth Church and Palace on the other,<sup>1</sup> I at first came to the conclusion that the bridge ought to be a granite-faced bridge; that is, the footways would be in reinforced concrete with granite facing and soffit, while the arches carrying the roadway would be constructed in steel. I prepared a design on these lines which was approved by the Select Committee of the House of Lords. Later on, however, Humphreys convinced me that there were many serious objections to a composite bridge of this kind, and I had noticed several myself; so I redesigned the elevations as a steel construction, and with the exception of the granite piers, the whole construction of the bridge is in steel. In order to get rid of the very ugly effect of the usual skeleton steel framing in contrast with solid masonry piers, I took a hint from ship's plating and covered in all the spandrels of the arches, so that seen from either side there is an unbroken surface throughout. The new design had to go before the Select Committee again, and I had a brisk passage with Lord Ullswater, who asked me if I really thought my steel bridge was better than the granite-faced one. I told him that I did, and that was precisely what I was there to tell him. The Committee passed my design. It has since been carried out successfully, and

<sup>1</sup> The Imperial Chemical buildings were not then erected, and I had no idea what they were to be like. The scale of the big obelisks was determined by the buildings then existing on the Westminster side and Lambeth Church and Palace on the opposite side of the river. If there is any discrepancy of scale with Thames House, the fault lies with that building, not with the bridge. These enormous buildings, such as Thames House and the Shell Mex. building east of Charing Cross, are ruining the scenery of London's river. They completely ignore their neighbours and in so doing overreach themselves.

was opened by His Majesty the King on July 19 of this year.

Here my memoirs stop. There are many things which might be said but are better left unsaid, and looking back on my past life I have much to be thankful for: my wife, my children, health and an active life, such measure of success as I have won, and a genuine enjoyment of my work. I have taken my share in three excellent fights: the first to save the City churches, the second to save London from disaster at Charing Cross and the third to save Waterloo Bridge. In all three fights, success crowned our efforts in the face of heavy odds, and I hope that those from whom I differed bear me no ill-will. We were all of us, rightly or wrongly, trying to do what we believed to be in the public interest. As for my works, they must speak for themselves for good or bad. An Architect's career may offer great opportunities and it has also great responsibilities. It must be rather sad to look back on a long life, however prosperous, and feel that you have left nothing behind you.

"What hath pride profited us? or what good hath riches with its vaunting brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow, and as a post that hasted by; and as a ship that passeth over the waves of the water, which when it has gone by, the trace thereof cannot be found, neither the pathway of the keel in the waves."<sup>1</sup> An artist at least has his chance—architects may cumber the earth with their failures. These in due course will be removed, but on the other hand we do have the chance, now and again, of leaving behind us something by which we shall be gratefully remembered in the future. I dreamed the other day that I was walking in my garden at Rye with a lady and, pointing to a heap on the ground, she said, "What is all this rubbish?" "These", I replied, "are the old suits of clothes which I have worn and thrown aside. They have varied year after year, but the man who wore them has not varied." So far as in me lay, I have been true to myself. I have lived my life my own way.

<sup>1</sup> *The Wisdom of Solomon.*



APPENDIX I  
ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS  
*REPORT ON THE CHANTREY BEQUEST*

By REGINALD BLOMFIELD, R.A.

*May 1917*

PART I<sup>1</sup>

ON THE REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE  
OF LORDS ON THE CHANTREY TRUST, AUGUST 1904

THE Chantrey Trust was established by Sir Francis Chantrey, R.A., in his will dated December 31, 1840, to come into effect on the decease or second marriage of Lady Chantrey. Its object, as defined in the will, was to be "the encouragement of British Fine Art in Painting and Sculpture only". The income is to be paid by his trustees to the President and Treasurer for the time being of the Royal Academy, or to the President and Treasurer of any other society which, "in the event (1) of the title 'Royal' being withdrawn by the Crown, or (2) of the Royal Academy being dissolved, or (3) its denomination altered, may be formed by the persons who may be the last members of the Royal Academy of Arts in London, whatever may be the denomination assumed by such last members". The income is to be laid out by the President and Council of the Royal Academy for the time being, "when and as they shall think it expedient in the purchase of works of Fine Art of the highest merit in painting and sculpture that can be obtained, either already executed or which may hereafter be executed by artists of any nation, provided such artists shall have actually

<sup>1</sup> In Parts I. and II. I have reported on the proceedings of the Committees of 1904 (Part I.) and of 1915 (Part II.), and have reserved all comments and suggestions for a memorandum (Part III.).



resided in Great Britain during the executing and completing of such works", no work of art to be bought unless the same "shall have been entirely executed within the shores of Great Britain". In the purchase of such works, "preference shall on all occasions be given to works of the highest merit that can be obtained", the prices to be liberal, and entirely at the discretion of the President and Council of the Royal Academy, who in making their decision "shall have regard solely to the intrinsic merit of the work in question and not permit any feeling of sympathy for an artist or his family to influence their decision". No commission for works to be executed shall at any time be given. The works to be purchased are to be exhibited, within the year succeeding the purchase, "in the Royal Academy or in some important public exhibition of Fine Art to be selected by the President and Council". The selection of works is to be by decision of a majority of members of the Council, and Chantrey expressed his "wish and intention" that the works so purchased shall be collected for the purpose of forming and establishing a public national collection of British Fine Art in painting and sculpture executed within the shores of Great Britain, in the confident expectation that the Government would ultimately provide a suitable gallery. In the event of the Academy or its successors ceasing to act, the trustees were to apply to Parliament for some proper scheme in strict accordance with Chantrey's intention that "such income shall for ever be devoted towards the encouragement of Fine Art in painting and sculpture executed within the shores of Great Britain". Lady Chantrey died in 1875, and the first purchase under the Trust was made in 1877, when a picture by William Hilton, R.A., was bought, but as Hilton had died thirty-eight years before,<sup>1</sup> the correctness of this purchase was questioned, and since that date purchases have been confined to contemporary work. Prior to 1897 the collection was temporarily deposited in the South Kensington Museum and in provincial galleries. In that year a permanent home was found for it in Sir Henry Tate's gallery of British Art at Millbank.

In June 1904 the Earl of Lytton moved in the House of Lords "that a Select Committee be appointed to enquire into the administration of the Chantrey Trust, and if necessary to make recommendations". This was agreed to, and a Select Committee

<sup>1</sup> Hilton died in 1839.

was appointed, consisting of the Earl of Carlisle, the Earl of Lytton, the Earl of Crewe, Lord Windsor, Lord Ribblesdale, Lord Newton, and Lord Killanin. The Committee held its first meeting in July 1904, when Lord Crewe was elected Chairman. Ten meetings were held, and the following witnesses were examined: Sir E. J. Poynter, Bt.; Sir W. B. Richmond, Sir L. Alma-Tadema; Messrs. Briton Riviere, Leslie, Brock, Davis, Frampton, Lucas, Prinsep, Sargent, and Stone, Royal Academicians; Mr. F. A. Eaton, Secretary to the Royal Academy; and Count Kessler, Lord Davey, Sir J. Guthrie, Sir W. M. Conway, Sir W. Armstrong, Messrs. MacColl, Fry, Nichols, Phillips, Quilter, Heseltine, Ward, Bate, Wallis, Holmes, Dell, Spielmann, and Prof. F. Brown.

After taking evidence from the members of the Royal Academy and the Secretary as to the procedure of the President and Council of the Royal Academy in the selection and purchase of works under the Trust, the Committee proceeded to examine witnesses on the following principal points:

1. The purpose of the Chantrey Trust—was it intended to encourage British Art by the encouragement of British artists, or was it Chantrey's intention that the Trust should be devoted to the establishment of a Historical National Gallery of modern British Art?

2. How far that purpose had been carried out; how far the Chantrey Collection is representative of modern British Art; and whether it is to be regarded as an individual collection complete in itself, or as a part only of the whole National Collection of modern British Art, whether housed at Millbank, South Kensington, or elsewhere.

3. Whether the conditions under which the President and Council of the Royal Academy have hitherto bought under the Chantrey Trust have injuriously affected the Chantrey Collection, the validity of those conditions and the desirability of modifying them in regard to the purchase of works by deceased artists, and the limitation to purchase only from artists themselves.

4. Whether better results might not be obtained by (a) reducing the purchasing body to a Committee of three, or to one person; (b) by taking the entire administration of the Fund away from the Academy and placing it in the hands of some other body or person; (c) by periodical weedings; and (d) by

letting the income accumulate and leaving longer intervals between the purchases.

5. Whether the sum of £300 a year paid by the Chantrey Trustees to the President is to be regarded as a fee for special services rendered in connection with the Chantrey Fund, or as an endowment of the office of President of the Royal Academy.

6. Other points raised referred to the limitation of the purchase of sculpture to finished works in bronze or marble, the purchase of black and white, and the practice of other countries.

I. In regard to the purpose of the Trust, Sir E. J. Poynter stated what he believed to be the Academy view, namely, that "it was meant for the encouragement of Art by the encouragement of the producer, and that the works purchased should be contemporary works, pictures of the year, bought from the artist". His own desire, and that, he believed, of every member of the Academy, had been to buy a good picture. This statement of the practice of the Academy in regard to the Trust was generally supported by members of the Academy, Sir W. Richmond holding that Chantrey had particularly in view the encouragement of ambitious or highly imaginative work which might otherwise be neglected. Mr. Leslie stated that it was not Chantrey's idea to create a fine National Gallery of British Art—"he wished to produce fine art in England, and to encourage art". Mr. Prinsep pointed out that it was through the artist that he wished to benefit the art of the country; Sir L. Alma-Tadema, that Chantrey's object was "that painters should profit by his Bequest through the purchase of their pictures", and that the collection so formed should represent "the art of the moment, rather than aim at being a gallery of acknowledged Masters". Evidence in support of Chantrey's intention was given from contemporary sources and from recollection.

On the other hand, it was urged by witnesses that Chantrey was not concerned with artists at all, but that his aim was to encourage Art, by the formation of a gallery of masterpieces of modern art, a British National Gallery on the lines already started by the British Institution. Mr. MacColl urged that painters who had worked in England should be included, and their residence within the shores of Great Britain dispensed with. Asked by the Chairman to say, "on his conscience as a man of honour", that the works of Degas, Monet, Pissarro and Rodin

are the things that the Testator would have looked upon as "works of the highest merit and likely to encourage a School of Art in Britain", he replied "Certainly", explaining that the Testator was to be looked upon as "a continuing being", and that if Chantrey were alive to-day he would say "Yes". Mr. MacColl considered that the great danger of the Fund was the purchase of "pictures of the moment", that purchases should not be confined to contemporary artists, and that a certain date should have been fixed, after which all British masters should be represented. He thought that, as stated by Lord Lytton, the Chantrey collection should be "a historical representation of the best and most representative works of art in this country", and that only one example of an artist should be purchased, until the "gaps" were filled up, "the gaps" referring to the works of men of genius not so far represented. From this point of view Mr. MacColl thought the Collection "grossly imperfect". Mr. Phillips also thought the object of the Trust was to form "a public National Collection of British Fine Art in Painting and Sculpture, executed within the shores of Great Britain, ultimately to form a sort of British National Gallery, to be representative of all modern schools, and that not only contemporary, but schools of Chantrey's own time". He did not, however, include Degas and Monet. Messrs. Quilter, Ward, Wallis, Bate, Brown, Sir W. Armstrong and Sir J. Guthrie agreed generally with this position, and with "what you might term the attack" (Prof. F. Brown, § 1787). A third view of the object of the Chantrey Trust was suggested by Mr. Fry, that Chantrey's object was "to increase the potency of England as a centre of art production", and that he had hoped to do this by bringing over artists of great repute. Mr. Nichols took the same view. Lord Lytton (§ 204) had previously suggested this interpretation, but it was repudiated by Sir E. J. Poynter.

Lord Davey, though he considered that the Academy had throughout acted in accordance with the terms of the will, held that Chantrey had intended his fund (1) for the purchase of works from the artists themselves, (2) to form a National Collection of British Art as opposed to a Historical Gallery of British Art, (3) that the Royal Academy should "buy the best pictures of the year to be had from time to time", that the Academy were really right in their interpretation of Chantrey's intentions,

and that "their *modus operandi* not only falls within the words of the will, but is the way which Chantrey contemplated his Trust should be carried into effect". He added, that under the will, the Academy had the widest discretion, and that it was open to its members either to do what they have done, or to have formed a Historical Gallery of Modern Art, without any breach of trust.

II. With this divergence of view as to the purpose of the Chantrey Trust, an entire difference of opinion as to the success or failure of the Academy in carrying out that Trust was inevitable. Witnesses on behalf of the Academy, while they admitted that the Collection was not perfect, maintained that it was the best that could be formed under the conditions by which the Academy considered itself bound. Sir W. B. Richmond thought that more attention might have been paid to outside exhibitions. Sir W. M. Conway thought that, "having regard to the fact that it was purchased by a committee, it is a fairly good collection". Mr. Heselstine would have voted out half the purchases. On the other hand, Mr. Ward thought the Collection "not a fair representation of the best British Art of the time, and not comparable to the Luxembourg". In regard to this latter point, it was admitted in evidence by Sir J. Guthrie that whereas the income of the Chantrey Fund is from £2000. to £2500, the funds available for the Luxembourg Gallery are from £8000 to £12,000 a year, and it was pointed out by Mr. Spielmann that, since 1892, the policy of the Luxembourg had been quite different. Sir W. Armstrong thought that out of about eighty pictures, only about twenty-three were worthy of the Collection, and only fourteen were best examples of the painters. Mr. Holmes thought that about twenty were good, about thirty unnecessary, and about thirty undesirable. Mr. MacColl described the Collection as "grossly imperfect", and, questioned by the Chairman, adhered to the word "interested" used by him in the following passage in the *Saturday Review*, June 25, 1904: "So long as the Chantrey Bequest is in the hands of a purely Academical body, the management will be the same—ignorant, interested and lazy", and explained that he meant by "interest" both pecuniary interest and prestige. Mr. Quilter also attacked the conduct of the Council of the Academy as prejudiced, and would "prefer not to speak of their motives

at all". In connection with the alleged unrepresentative character of the Chantrey Collection, witnesses maintained that the Collection was to be considered as complete in itself without any reference to other pictures that there might be in the Tate Gallery. On this assumption it was urged that the Collection failed; but it was pointed out by Mr. Heseltine and Sir W. M. Conway that the Chantrey Collection, being presumably housed "in permanence" in the Tate Gallery, must be considered as a part of that Collection, and that when distinguished artists were already well represented elsewhere in the Gallery, there was the less necessity to purchase further works of those artists under the Chantrey Trust. Mr. Heseltine pointed out that, taking the various collections as all under the control of the Trustees of the National Gallery, all the artists named by Mr. MacColl as unrepresented were in fact represented, with the exception of Mr. Holman Hunt. Mr. Dell thought that the Chantrey Collection should be absorbed in the National Collection in the Tate Gallery, and the Chantrey Fund handed over to the Directors of that Gallery as a permanent endowment, independent of the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square.

III. It was maintained at length by witnesses that the conditions under which the President and Council of the Academy considered themselves to be bound under the will seriously crippled the Chantrey Collection, these conditions being (*a*) that works of art should be contemporary work, and purchased only from the artists themselves; (*b*) that they may not be purchased at auctions; (*c*) that no commissions may be given. The witnesses representing the Academy pointed out that "commissions or orders for the execution of works to be afterwards purchased" were expressly forbidden by the will; that, in regard to purchases at auctions, the direction of the will that "the prices to be paid shall be liberal", and that purchasers were to be selected by the decision of a majority of the Members of the Council for the time being of the Royal Academy, rendered it impossible under the terms of the will to purchase works at auctions, though it was admitted that good pictures might be, and had been, lost owing to this limitation of the field of purchase. In regard to purchase direct from artists themselves, and not from owners or dealers, it was maintained that this followed from the intention of Chantrey to encourage

Art by encouraging artists, and in this way the artist got the full benefit of the price without having to discount commissions on purchase. Sir E. J. Poynter said "there is a phrase in the will which points to his intention that the works should be bought from the artist, that is, that the best price should be given for them without bargaining". Sir W. Richmond thought that the condition of purchase direct from the artist might be given up; Sir W. Armstrong and Mr. Dell thought that the Academy had multiplied restrictions on its own action unnecessarily and to the detriment of the Collection. In regard to the limitation of purchase to contemporary works, it was admitted that the will allowed the purchase of works by artists recently deceased. Mr. Quilter did not think that the terms of the bequest had been carried out at all; whereas Mr. Heseltine, questioned by Lord Lytton, thought that the system of purchase adopted by the Council is "a system in accordance with Sir Francis Chantrey's Will."

IV. In regard to the purchasing body established by the will, viz. the President and Council for the time being of the Royal Academy, it was contended by witnesses that not only was this the worst possible body for the purpose of forming a great collection, but also that the body itself was prejudiced, and deterred by its own interests and indifference to those of others from making serious efforts to form a truly representative collection.

(a) In regard to the President and Council, witnesses urged that the Council was too numerous a body for the purpose, and that a smaller Committee of three, or if possible a single purchaser, would be more effective. Mr. Sargent supported this view, urging that in this way tendencies would be represented, rather than the neutral colour of Committees; "manifestations of art of a very extreme and absolute character (which in time, by the way, do not seem extreme), would find a purchaser if individual taste were the arbiter" (§§ 1100-1108). Mr. Framp-ton thought that a "one-man" purchaser would be fatal, and Mr. Phillips took a similar view. Sir W. Richmond suggested the appointment of a Sub-Committee, with the President as Chairman, to report to the Council, the Council to report to the Assembly, who would ultimately decide on the purchase. The Chairman pointed out that meanwhile the picture would prob-

ably be sold. Mr. MacColl's position was uncertain. He thought that under the will the Council could delegate their powers of purchase to one or two members, and "when the purchase is made, they the (President and Council) could sign the book" (§§ 1293-5). Elsewhere he suggested that the best single purchaser would be the Director of the British or the modern side of the National Gallery; "that would relieve the purchases of any possible taint of interest" (§ 1381), and he suggested that such a Director might be found in Mr. Sargent: but later in his evidence he thought that the single purchaser should be the President of the Royal Academy, contending that the sum of £300 a year bequeathed by Chantrey to the President was a salary for the work. The President would have definite responsibilities, and realise "wider powers under the will"; he admitted however, that delegation to a single individual could not be done without altering the terms of the will. Mr. Fry (and also Mr. Dell) thought that the Chantrey Fund should be taken away from the Academy altogether and allotted to the Tate Gallery, though he admitted that this would be "a strong order" and "quite outside the terms of the will". He advocated the introduction of a "trained expert from outside" to administer the Fund, in place of an executant artist. Mr. Fry did not define the "trained expert" further. Sir W. M. Conway and Mr. Holmes thought purchase should be delegated to one man. Sir J. Guthrie thought an individual purchaser should be selected "quite outside the Royal Academy altogether", urging that though the artist is the best expert, there are men like the late Mr. Stevenson trained to know the whereabouts of art and its commercial value and make this their work in life. Professor Brown suggested that a delegate should be appointed by the Government to prepare a list on which the Council would vote. Mr. Quilter wished to take the whole Trust out of the hands of the Academy as a prejudiced body that had shown "no regard to the feelings of the 10,000 English artists for the last twenty-seven years".

Sir W. Armstrong and Mr. Spielmann thought the purchase should be in the hands of a small Committee; Mr. Ward, that the Council should be strengthened by the addition of Associates and representatives of other Societies. Mr. Bate suggested that outside Societies should nominate representatives to a central Committee who would elect two or three to serve with



the Council in the selection of pictures, and referred to the successful precedent of the St. Louis Exhibition. Lord Davey pointed out that under the will it was impossible for the Council to delegate their powers. They could appoint a Committee or one man, "but in the ultimate decision they must exercise their own judgement".

(b) Witnesses averred that the Council of the Royal Academy was a prejudiced body, and that all other Societies were handicapped in consequence. Mr. MacColl asserted that a sum of £30,000, the balance of the funds of the British Institution, and the Chantrey Fund, had become "very much an Academy endowment"; that the purchases were limited to the Academy Exhibition; that "no outside picture is ever considered purely on its merits dissociated from the competition of Academy pictures"; that the Academy "refuses recognition to artists" if they do not exhibit at the Academy; and he suggested that once in every five years there should be an exhibition to which other Societies should send, the Academy acting as the central organizing body, and the Chantrey Trust to have the right of pre-emption at an average price of about £500. Mr. MacColl did not explain the method of selection and purchase. Mr. Quilter considered that the whole position of the Academy was "illogical and absurd".

Professor Brown maintained that certain artists did not send to the Royal Academy owing to the want of appreciation shown by that body. These statements were directly traversed by witnesses on behalf of the Academy. The Secretary pointed out that "a fair number" of pictures from other galleries were in fact suggested for purchase. Other witnesses stated that members of the Council visited other galleries for the purpose of searching out suitable works, and that though it had clearly been in Chantrey's mind that purchases would be made from the Academy they were not confined to that Exhibition, and that so far from purchases having been confined to members of the Academy, out of a total of 105 purchases, only thirty-one had been made from artists who at the time of purchase were members of the Royal Academy.

Sir W. Richmond thought that the Academy had not paid sufficient attention to other Exhibitions, and Mr. Stone referred to the impracticability of the purchase of pictures in Scotland. Sir J. Guthrie, who dealt at length with the Trust in relation to

Scottish artists, despaired of the present system, and hinted that he might ask for part of the Fund to be allocated to Scotland. He admitted, however, that "the money was unquestionably left to the Royal Academy", and that it would be very forcible dealing with Chantrey's will for the Royal Academy to be the nominal purchasers only. It was suggested that the Collection would be improved by periodical weeding, and by making the purchases at less frequent intervals.

V. It was contended by Messrs. MacColl and Ward that the £300 a year left by Chantrey to the President was a fee or salary for specific work in connection with the Chantrey Trust. Mr. Spielmann gave evidence to show that the £300 a year was left to the President as P.R.A., and not in consideration of his work in connection with the Chantrey Trust. This was corroborated by Mr. Eaton. Lord Davey, though not positively saying so, inclined to think that this was the correct interpretation of the will, and that if the Trust were taken away from the Royal Academy the endowment would still remain with the Academy and would not lapse with the Fund. No explanation was offered of the bearing of this point on the enquiry.

VI. In regard to the limitation of the purchase of works of sculpture to finished works in bronze or marble, it was generally admitted that it might be desirable to extend this on occasion to the purchase of models in plaster, gesso or wax.

The Select Committee reported to the House of Lords on August 8, 1904. After summarizing the history of the Trust and the procedure of the Council of the Royal Academy in the selection and purchase of pictures under the Trust, the Committee reported—

(a) That the Collection, "regarded as a National Gallery of modern British art, is incomplete and in a large degree unrepresentative", and that it includes works of minor importance falling short of "that degree of artistic distinction aimed at by Sir Francis Chantrey".

(b) That this has been due to the conditions of purchase which the Council have felt themselves bound to observe, viz. that pictures must be bought from the artists and not at auctions, that they should be contemporary work, and that only

the works of foreign artists settled in this country came within the scope of the Chantrey Trust. In regard to the lack of representation of Schools exhibited out of London, such as the Scottish, it was pointed out that it was impossible for artists to travel over the country in search of pictures; and in regard to the practice of making all purchases at or about the time of the Summer Exhibition, for which the Academy was also criticized, that this was partly due to the belief that this was Chantrey's intention, and partly to the inevitable tendency to take the most obvious method of action.

(c) In regard to the charge of interested action on the part of the Academy "the Committee desire to distinctly record their belief that there is no ground for any imputation of corrupt or interested motives against that body". They thought, however, that "too exclusive a preference had been given to pictures shown at the annual exhibition of the Royal Academy, and that insufficient attention had been paid to other exhibitions"; that a wider interpretation should be given to the will in regard to purchase; that works of deceased artists should only be purchased under exceptional circumstances; that the date limit should not be earlier than 1877; that in the case of foreign artists regularly resident in Great Britain, their work might be purchased "when it has notably influenced artistic production in this country".

(d) The Committee thought that the Chantrey Collection should be considered in connection with the rest of the collection in the Tate Gallery, and not apart from it.

(e) The Committee considered the "constitution of the purchasing body as appointed by the Testator inherently defective", being far too large, and that some form of devolution was necessary.

After referring to various suggestions the Committee recommended the appointment of a Committee of three composed of the President *ex officio*, a Royal Academician appointed by the Council, and an Associate nominated by the body of Associates; the appointment to be for five years, and the members not to be eligible for immediate re-election.

(f) They recommended that regulations be made by which the principal artistic Societies of England and Scotland should report to this Committee the existence of important works of art; the final power of selection and purchase to be entrusted to this Committee,

(g) The Committee recommended that effect should be given to these provisions either under a scheme of the Charity Commissioners on the application of the Trustees, or, if not, by Act of Parliament.

(h) The Committee recommended that the clause forbidding the purchase of incomplete works of sculpture should be modified, and that though the Council had been absolutely justified in interpreting Chantrey's will to preclude works not executed entirely in Great Britain, they be empowered to purchase work that may have been in part executed abroad.

## PART II

ON THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF TRUSTEES OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY, APPOINTED BY THE TRUSTEES TO ENQUIRE INTO THE RETENTION OF IMPORTANT PICTURES IN THIS COUNTRY AND OTHER MATTERS CONNECTED WITH THE NATIONAL ART COLLECTIONS; ISSUED 1915

In 1911 a Committee, consisting of Earl Curzon (Chairman), Sir Edgar Vincent and Mr. Benson, Trustees, and Sir C. Holroyd, Director of the National Gallery, was appointed by the Trustees of the National Gallery in the terms of the above reference. The first meeting was held in December 1911, and after preliminary meetings to settle procedure, the Committee, in the autumn of 1912, took evidence, "both orally and by means of written questions and answers, from a number of gentlemen holding prominent positions in the art world, and possessing a personal and official interest in the National Collections". The list of witnesses gives the names of Sir Edward Poynter, Sir Sidney Colvin, Sir Hercules Read, Sir Cecil Smith, Sir Walter Armstrong, Messrs. C. Aitken, D. S. MacColl, C. J. Holmes, Clutton Brock, Roger Fry, Herbert Cook, Lockett Agnew, Fairfax Murray, and Robert Ross.

The Report, which occupies 40 folio pages exclusive of appendices, was completed and signed by the Committee in December 1913, but was not issued as a Blue Book till the spring of 1915. It deals with a great variety of questions, and endeavours to cover the whole of the ground in regard to the National Art Collections. The enquiry into the Chantrey Bequest, and the suggestions made by this Committee in regard

to it, are brought in as a subordinate part of this enquiry, and form Section 5 of Part III of the Report. Lord Curzon, however, added a Memorandum on the Chantrey purchases in the Tate Gallery, drafted by himself, as Appendix I, and witnesses were examined in regard to the Chantrey Bequest. That portion only of the Committee's Report, and of the evidence taken which relates to the Chantrey Bequest, is dealt with in my Report.

In relation to the Chantrey Bequest, the Chairman opened the enquiry with three stereotyped questions:

(1) "Are you in favour of carrying out the recommendations of the Chantrey Committee, or do you suggest any modifications in them?"

(2) "Do you think the Trustees of the National Gallery should have the right to refuse to hang in the Tate Gallery any of the pictures that may be bought under the Chantrey Bequest by the purchasing Committee of the Royal Academy?"

(3) "Do you think that the whole of the Chantrey Bequest pictures should be exhibited on the walls, and that the Trustees should have the power to remove any picture for storage or loan?"

These questions were addressed to witnesses in the following order: Sir S. Colvin, Mr. Aitken, Mr. MacColl, Mr. Brock, Mr. Fry, Mr. Holmes, Sir W. Armstrong and Mr. Ross. The answers of all these witnesses were in the affirmative. Sir S. Colvin thought that the Trustees should have the right of veto; Mr. Aitken, that in the interests of the Tate Gallery "the Trustees cannot consent to continue to waive their veto in future", though he admitted that "the Chantrey Bequest does supply a certain number of valuable pictures". Mr. MacColl thought "the recommendations of the Chantrey Committee (of 1904) a timid compromise . . . a first summons to the Academy—and they have not been carried out. The entire system is wrong." Mr. Clutton Brock thought the Chantrey Fund should be placed under National control in order to carry out Chantrey's intentions: "the present administrators evidently do not intend to carry them out". When Mr. Holmes was reached, the Chairman remarked that there was no need to investigate him further on these points "because we know your views, and so far have not found anybody who disagrees with them". The Chairman omitted to ask Sir W. Armstrong question No. 1,

but repeated all three questions to Mr. Ross, who, in agreeing to them all, gave it as his opinion that with the exception of seven which he named all the pictures should be returned either to the Academy or to the Chantrey Trustees: "they are the laughing-stock not only of Europe but of England". The Chairman, in his examination of a previous witness, Mr. Roger Fry, had already remarked—"the 'rubbish' would apply particularly to the Chantrey Collection?" to which Mr. Fry agreed.

These three questions were not asked of Mr. Fairfax Murray or Sir Cecil Smith. Sir H. Read thought it only reasonable that the Trustees of the National Gallery should have the power of rejection; and Mr. Cook, that this "was the only practicable safeguard against abuses".

On the question of loans, witnesses agreed that the power of loan to provincial galleries was desirable. The Chairman, in connection with loans, remarked that "a considerable extension of the principle of loans would be very valuable in the case of the Tate Gallery, with a view to getting rid of the Chantrey pictures now on the walls", and, addressing Mr. Agnew, said, "You probably hold the view that every one of our witnesses has taken, that the present system is intolerable?" Mr. Agnew did not reply to this suggestion, but remarked that the pictures would be wanted in Canada, Australia and South Africa. On the sixth day, and after the examination of ten witnesses, the evidence of Sir Edward Poynter was taken. The Chairman pointed out that nothing had been done by the Academy to carry out the recommendations of the 1904 Committee. Sir Edward replied that a Committee of Painters and Sculptors had, in fact, been appointed, but that the directions of the will were quite definite in regard to the final selection. Asked if he considered the Chantrey Collection representative of modern British Art, he replied, "with some exceptions, it is a very good collection", and the best of its kind here or abroad. Asked if he thought it "reasonable and fair" that the Trustees of the National Gallery should have no voice in the matter, he replied that it all depended whether you trusted the purchasing body. In his opinion no better body could be found than the Council of the Royal Academy. The Chairman again asked at some length whether it was fair that the Trustees should be "bound

to accept the whole of the pictures selected for them by the Academy, good or bad, and have no control in the matter?" Sir Edward replied, "Seeing the composition of the Council, I think it is"; further, he said that the reason why certain painters were not represented was that their pictures, being in the hands of dealers, were not to be had in the past, and that the choice was, in fact, very limited. In answer to the Chairman, Sir Edward Poynter said that to take the Fund out of the hands of the Academy and transfer it to another body would be a strong measure, only possible by Act of Parliament, and only to be justified "on the ground that the Academy is incompetent, and the other body more competent". In his opinion, if the Trustees of the National Gallery rejected purchases made by the Academy under the Chantrey Bequest, the Academy might refuse to act, the Trustees being bound to accept the pictures purchased, though not necessarily to hang them.

The Chairman asked certain of the witnesses whether they thought it desirable that the Trustees of the National Gallery should bring matters to an issue by refusing to accept the pictures purchased by the Academy under the Chantrey Bequest. Mr. MacColl, who was entirely in favour of this course, stated that when he was Keeper of the Tate Gallery he went into this question with Mr. Runciman at the Treasury, and it was decided that "the best plan was to produce a 'deadlock', namely, that the Trustees shall refuse in future to accept pictures and sculpture in whose choice they had no part". He added that he "did not see what the Academy could do in the face of a determined stand by the Trustees". He thought it "was reasonable to suppose that if a National Gallery of British Art had existed when Chantrey made his will, he would have placed the administration of his bequest in its hands. No such gallery existed; he therefore turned to the Academy," and he said finally that "the Chantrey Fund would provide a much-needed endowment for the Tate Gallery", or, if this scheme was thought "too ruthless", a small part of the Fund might be left to the Academy "for prizes to be given to its exhibitors". The Chairman said there was no need to interrogate Mr. MacColl farther, "because we are familiar with your evidence given before the Chantrey Committee, for which you were mainly responsible, and I think we agree with the bulk of what you say".

The Committee in their Report stated that it was impossible 'to make the Tate a Gallery of British Art so long as the pictures purchased under the Chantrey Bequest are "hung indiscriminately" on the walls of the Gallery; and recommended that:

1. "Legislation be undertaken in order to place the Chantrey Bequest on a sound footing, and to vest its administration in the hands of the Trustees of the Tate Gallery."

2. That, with a view to this legislation, "the Trustees of the Tate should notify the Treasury and those responsible for the administration of the Chantrey Bequest that they are not in future prepared to accept pictures or sculpture in the selection of which they have had no voice".

3. That, failing such legislation, the Trustees shall exercise in a more efficacious manner their existing rights of storage and loan, with a view to withdrawing from permanent exhibition such works as are unworthy of that honour.

4. That a new Board of Trustees be established for the Tate Gallery.

5. That "unless the income from the Chantrey Bequest can be placed at the disposal of the new Board", an annual grant be made by H.M. Government.

In Appendix No. I Lord Curzon dealt with the correspondence between the Treasury and the Royal Academy and Chantrey Trustees in regard to the exact position of the Trustees of the National Gallery in relation to the Chantrey Collection after it had been handed over to the Trustees, and more particularly as to any right of elimination and selection residing in the Trustees of the National Gallery. The Chantrey Trustees and the Academy contended that there was no such right, and the Treasury, after correspondence, accepted this view (November 11, 1898). Lord Curzon's contention is that, notwithstanding, this does not affect the rights of sale and loan by the Trustees of the National Gallery under certain conditions defined by the Acts.

With reference to the right of elimination, in 1907 the Trustees of the National Gallery suggested that this right in regard to the Chantrey pictures should be restored to them. The Treasury would not agree to a revision of the settlement of 1898, but suggested that, by arrangement with the Academy, the National Gallery Board should have some voice in the selection of the pictures purchased. The National Gallery Board declined this



suggestion, and there the matter rests. Lord Curzon contends that it is "absurd and indefensible" that there should be only meagre resources for the National Collection of modern pictures, while there exists a fund of £2000 a year over which the Trustees of the Tate Gallery have no control; that "this considerable endowment is administered in a manner that fails to command public confidence, and has been unfavourably reported on by a Select Committee of the House of Lords". He therefore urges the necessity of legislation and, in order to bring this about, the establishment of a deadlock between the Trustees of the Tate Gallery on the one hand and the Council of the Royal Academy and the Chantrey Trustees on the other; "such an impasse would at once compel the attention of the Government".

### PART III

#### A MEMORANDUM ON THE SITUATION ARISING OUT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEES OF 1904 AND 1911-15, AS REPORTED IN PARTS I AND II, BY REGINALD BLOMFIELD, R.A.

A difference is at once apparent in the proceedings of the two Committees. That of 1904 was an official Committee duly appointed by the House of Lords to consider the Chantrey Trust. The enquiry was conducted by the Chairman, Lord Crewe, with scrupulous fairness and courtesy. The members of that Committee were evidently anxious to get at the facts without partiality or prejudice; both sides of the case were adequately represented, and in the result the Committee reported that there was no ground for any imputation of corrupt or interested motives against the Academy, but recommended certain alterations in the constitution of the selecting body within the Academy, a wider interpretation of the will in detail, and more attention to exhibitions other than that of the Royal Academy—which were fair and reasonable conclusions to draw from the evidence before them, and which in fact have the sympathy of several members of the Academy. The Report itself was a brief and businesslike document, occupying four folio pages.

The Report of the Committee of Trustees of the National Gallery, issued in 1915, occupying forty folio pages (exclusive

of appendices), is extremely voluminous, and contains a good deal of controversial matter. The Committee itself was not an official Government Committee, though from the fact that its Report was issued as a Blue-book printed under the authority of H.M. Stationery Office it might easily have been mistaken for one. It was a Committee appointed by the Trustees of the National Gallery, and consisted of three of the Trustees and the Director—that is, it was a self-appointed Committee, but it examined witnesses, took evidence, and reported in the same manner as if it had been a Committee of the Houses of Parliament.

In regard to that large and highly important part of its investigation which dealt with matters relating to the National Art Collections, but not connected with the Chantrey Trust, I offer no opinion; but I would point out that, though nominally only a subordinate issue, the Chantrey Trust was in fact in the forefront of the battle, and the reason why the amount of evidence taken in connection with it was relatively small seems to have been that the verdict was a foregone conclusion and quite independent of evidence that might have been obtained. That this was so is proved (a) by the *personnel* of the witnesses invited to give evidence on this point, and (b) by the general trend of the examination of the witnesses. On a matter of such vital importance to artists as the Chantrey Trust one might reasonably expect that the evidence of artists would have been taken; yet out of a total of fourteen witnesses,<sup>1</sup> only one artist of eminence, Sir E. J. Poynter, was called to give evidence on the Chantrey Trust, the remainder of the witnesses being Directors and ex-Directors of Galleries or Departments, critics, journalists, valuers and dealers. Sir Edward alone defended the administration of the Chantrey Trust; all the other witnesses piled up the evidence of their opinions against it with a unanimity which would be strange on any hypothesis but that of a carefully organized case and a packed jury. Leading questions were put to witnesses, and in referring to Mr. MacColl's evidence before the Committee of 1904, the Chairman of the Committee

<sup>1</sup> The witnesses were: Sir Sidney Colvin, Mr. Aitken, Mr. MacColl, Mr. Clutton Brock, Mr. Fry, Mr. Holmes, Sir W. Armstrong, Mr. Ross, Mr. Fairfax Murray, Mr. Agnew, Sir Edward Poynter, Sir Herbert Cook, Sir Hercules Read and Sir Cecil Smith, and they were examined in the above order.

of the Trustees of the National Gallery said *pendente lite*, "I think we agree with the bulk of what you say". We are not, therefore, surprised to find in the Report the words "the incubus of the Chantrey Bequest", and the following astonishing statements:

(a) On page 30 we find it stated that "our witnesses" "were not less unanimous in recommending that matters should be brought to a head by a refusal on the part of the Trustees any longer to accept pictures in the selection of which they had had no voice". An examination of the evidence taken shows that some only, and not all, of the witnesses were asked their opinions on this point; therefore it could not be the whole body of witnesses summoned who were "unanimous", and "our witnesses" cannot refer to the whole body of witnesses called, inasmuch as some of them were never asked for their opinions at all. Those who were asked and were "unanimous" in support of the recommendation were witnesses known to be hostile to the Academy. It appears from this that the Committee throughout regarded the witnesses hostile to the Academy as "our witnesses" and the rest as of no account—an extraordinary position to be taken up by an impartial Committee of investigation with a sense of responsibility to the public. At intervals the Chairman almost appears to have forgotten that he was Chairman of a Committee of enquiry, and in his zeal for the Tate Gallery assumed the part of an advocate.

(b) The Report went on to say that the transfer of the Chantrey Fund and its administration to the Board of Trustees for the Tate Gallery "would have the further advantage of being in strict accord with what were undoubtedly the intentions of Sir Francis Chantrey himself". Such a statement would be merely grotesque, if it were not a most mischievous misrepresentation of the facts. Sir Francis Chantrey, an Academician of Academicians, knew perfectly well what he was about. He was very fond of the Academy; he knew it intimately, having been an Academician for over twenty years when he made his will; and he definitely and deliberately left the selection and purchase of works under his Bequest to the President and Council of the Royal Academy. At the Committee of 1904, evidence was given from contemporary sources showing Chantrey's complete confidence in the Academy, and no fair-minded man who studies the evidence could admit that under any circumstances Chan-

trey would have been prepared to hand over this Trust to the Board of a Gallery having no other connection with the Academy, and consisting of members none of whom were necessarily or even probably artists at all. So firmly did Chantrey intend his Trust to be administered by Academicians that "in the event of the Royal Academy being dissolved, or its denomination altered", he desired that the Trust should be administered by any other Society or Association which "may be formed by the persons *who may be the last members of the Royal Academy of Arts in London*", whatever they might call themselves. This condition, not noted by the Committee of 1904 or by Lord Curzon's Committee, makes it absolutely clear that Chantrey had only the Academicians in view for the purpose of administering his Trust, and disposes of Mr. MacColl's contention that had a Gallery of Modern British Art existed in Chantrey's time, he would have left the administration of the Trust to that Gallery and not to the Academy. I shall return to this later.

(c) The Committee of the Trustees of the National Gallery hold out as an inducement to the Government to sanction their scheme for the annexation of the Chantrey Fund, that "if by these means an income of £2000 per annum were placed at the disposal of the Trustees as a permanent annual endowment of the National Gallery of Modern Art, the State would be by so much relieved of the necessity of providing a much larger annual subsidy for this branch of the National Collections". This suggestion, coming from the Committee, is simply astounding. In their eyes, Trusts seem to have no sanctity whatever; but that is not yet the general view of Englishmen. Either it is right or it is wrong to alter fundamentally the Chantrey Trust—that is a question which has to be settled on its merits; but to offer a bribe to the Government to induce it to sanction what many fair-minded people regard as a gross and gratuitous injustice seems to me, if I may use the phrase, absolutely the limit. "*Facilis descensus Averni*", especially in the company of "our witnesses".

In regard to Sir F. Chantrey's intentions, Lord Curzon's Committee ignores half the evidence given before the 1904 Committee, and the direct statement of Chantrey's will that his desire was to encourage "British fine art in painting and sculpture", and to do so by the purchase of works of fine art under certain definite conditions. To lay it down as "indubit-

able" that he had no other purpose in his mind than the promotion of a National Gallery of British Art is to beg the question, and a *suppressio veri* which amounts to an *affirmatio falsi*. The two purposes laid down in his will must be taken as complementary to each other.

Throughout the proceedings Chantrey's will seems to have been regarded by some of the witnesses as a *corpus vile* on which to exercise their ingenuity. In his evidence before the Committee of 1904, Mr. MacColl, asked by the Chairman "on his conscience as a man of honour" whether he would "have the hardihood to say that the works of Degas, Monet, Pissarro and Rodin are the things the testator would have looked upon as work of the highest merit and most likely to encourage a school of art in Britain", replied, "Certainly, you must suppose the testator to be a continuing being. . . . I think Chantrey would have said 'Yes'." The evidence of Chantrey's life, character and work is all to the contrary. Mr. MacColl evolved his reply from his inner consciousness, and it is an absolutely unwarrantable assumption, false in history, criticism and psychology. Mr. MacColl's statement that the balance of £30,000 left over by the British Institution and the Chantrey Fund (§ 1212), had "become very much an Academy endowment" was equally unfounded. With the exception of the bequest of £300 a year to the President and £50 to the Secretary, the Academy does not benefit one farthing by either Fund. But it was not only "our witnesses" who dealt so freely in assertions. In Appendix No. I, Lord Curzon, referring to the Chantrey Trust, also speaks of "the indubitable intentions of its founder" and goes on to say—"the anomaly is all the greater when it is remembered that this considerable endowment is administered in a manner that fails to command public confidence, and has been unfavourably reported on by a Select Committee of the House of Lords". § 13 of the Select Committee's Report on the Chantrey Trust says: "In offering some criticisms of the past proceedings of the Royal Academy in this regard, the Committee desire distinctly to record their belief that there is no ground for any imputation of corrupt or interested motives against that body". I commend this passage to the attention of his Lordship.

The Committee of Trustees of the National Gallery showed an insistent anxiety to obtain evidence in support of a policy of

forcing the hand of the Academy by the refusal of the Trustees of the Tate Gallery to accept the Chantrey purchases; and it appears from a remarkable admission in the evidence of Mr. MacColl that, when Keeper of the Tate Gallery, he concocted a scheme with Mr. Runciman at the Treasury for this express purpose. If he was in such close relations with the Government as this implies, why was it necessary to make these stealthy preparations of which we now hear for the first time? Why not come out into the open and say what he had to say to the proper people, and not to a Minister who had no knowledge of the subject, or any claim to be heard on a matter of artistic policy? Surely it would have been better to get into touch with those immediately concerned with the Chantrey Trust, artists themselves after all. These elaborate plots are hardly the right way to set about any reform, least of all that of a Trust administered by a body at least as competent to judge pictures and sculpture as the whole of the Trustees, Directors, critics, dealers, journalists and valuers of this country put together, and declared by a competent and fair-minded official Committee to have administered its Trust with integrity, if not always with sufficient breadth of view. It would almost seem that these fanatics for a reformed and purer administration consider that the end justifies the means, especially when the end in view is, *inter alia*, the seizing of a Trust Fund of something over £2000 a year to supply a "much-needed endowment for the Tate Gallery". "If", added Mr. MacColl, "such a scheme is too ruthless, a small part of the Fund might be left to the Academy as prizes for its exhibitors",<sup>1</sup> a remark which can only be interpreted as a studied insult to the Academy. It is proposed by the Committee of the Trustees of the National Gallery to take this Fund out of the hands of its legally appointed administrators, and to transfer it bodily either to the Trustees of the Tate Gallery, or to the Director, or to both, on the grounds that it is intolerable that the Trustees should have to hang pictures which they have not selected themselves, and, by inference, that the Trustees are better judges of modern art than the Council of the Academy. *Prima facie*, one would have thought that artists engaged in the active exercise of their art would be better judges of modern pictures than gentlemen who

<sup>1</sup> Mr. MacColl's evidence before Committee of Trustees of the National Gallery, § 471.

have no practical knowledge of the processes of painting. For it must be recollected that this is a question of modern work, not of old masters, so that all the paraphernalia of *provenance*, archaeological research and knowledge of commercial values, which form the stock-in-trade of the "trained expert", do not come into play at all. We are dealing with facts in front of us, and we may ask why it is to be assumed as an axiom that the amateur is a better judge of such matters than the professional. What guarantee has the public, which we profess to serve so zealously, that the amateur is and will be so in fact? How is the public to be protected from the risk of that interested administration on the part of the Trustees of the Tate Gallery of which "our witnesses" accuse the Academy? An enthusiastic Board of Trustees, supported by a well-organized Press, might quite conceivably flood the Tate Gallery with the works of Cubists, Futurists, and any other faddists that make good copy for the Press. The critic and the journalist without special knowledge have gradually usurped the direction of opinion in the arts—not the opinion of instructed persons, but that of the much larger section of the public which follows the man who shouts loudest, longest and latest. The same thing happened in France in the latter part of the eighteenth century, with most disastrous results to the art of that country. It appears to be forgotten that the knowledge of the technique of art is a matter of exact knowledge and of thorough training, not to be picked up in magazine articles or even in the columns of the daily press, or by attendance at sales, or by the inspection of an interminable quantity of pictures. It can only be learnt in the practice of the arts, and a glib tongue and ready pen do not supply the place of this laboriously won knowledge, often the acquisition of a life-time.

Some of the witnesses favoured the idea that for Directors of Picture Galleries, and similar appointments, it was not trained artists that were wanted so much as "trained experts". Mr. Aitken thought, that though painters might be useful on an advisory body together with dealers and valuers, they would be useful not as painters, but on account of their experience in buying for Public Galleries. Mr. Fry, in his evidence before the 1904 Committee, advocated the introduction of "trained experts" for the selection of pictures. He did not define what he meant by a "trained expert", except by a vague and quite

unhistorical allusion to "a thing which happened in the Middle Ages", and all Lord Carlisle could get out of him was that he preferred his "trained expert" to an executant artist. Sir J. Guthrie, before the 1904 Committee, also said he thought that an individual should be selected as purchaser "outside the Royal Academy altogether", and said there were men like the late Mr. Stevenson trained to know the whereabouts of art, and who make this their "work in life". The Chairman pointed out that the Chantrey Fund could not find the money to pay such a person. Sir J. Guthrie replied that he meant a "man whose exclusive calling is in that region", but it is quite certain that such a man could not do his "work in life" for nothing; and if not paid by the Trust, who is to pay him? Is he to recoup himself by commissions? We seem to be slipping deeper and deeper into the mire.

Mr. Holmes, giving evidence before the Committee of 1904, when asked to define what he meant by "serious critics", admitted he could not do so. Asked by Lord Carlisle if he confined the term to "the gentlemen who write", he seemed to think he did, but when Lord Carlisle not unnaturally asked whether the decision on pictures is to rest solely with "the gentlemen who write", Mr. Holmes did not suggest this, but went on to say that they are the only people who express any opinion on the subject in print, a self-evident statement which left Lord Carlisle's question where it was. The fact is, we artists, painters, sculptors and architects are asked to abdicate our position, and to submit to the ruling on all artistic matters of this compact body of officials, journalists, dealers and amateurs who have set themselves up as the high priests and prophets of art without any real knowledge of its practice.

The position is a serious one, in regard to the whole future of art in this country. We are "up against" a well-organized body of men who, for various reasons, are sworn enemies of the Royal Academy, and determined to oust it from its paramount position. Among them are men of considerable ability and literary skill. One may credit them with a real anxiety to make the Tate a great and representative Gallery of Modern British Art; but their methods of attack are disingenuous in the last degree, and suggest less the impartial critic than the summary methods of the highwayman who holds a pistol to your head and says, "Your money or your life!"



It is, I submit, for the Academy to raise the whole issue to a higher plane, above the level of merely personal controversy. The position of the Academy in relation to the Chantrey Trust is intimately connected with the whole future policy of the Academy in regard to other Societies; and it has a bearing on the important educational work carried on in our Schools, which was not referred to in the evidence or reports of either of the two Committees. The value of that work has been recognized recently by Government, and it has also been recognized that our Exhibitions are the necessary complement to the work of our Schools. It would be a grave injury to this work—a work which there is reason to hope may be largely extended and developed after the war—if the administration of the Chantrey Fund is now to be taken out of our hands, implying that we are either unjust or incompetent stewards, and if for our control and direction of the arts is to be substituted the control of a body of men who are not artists at all. It is only artists who understand each other and who know where the shoe pinches, and I cannot conceive anything more disastrous for the future of the arts than to take the direction and control of broad questions of artistic policy out of the hands of artists and hand them over to amateurs. Painters and sculptors naturally express themselves through their own particular arts, and not elsewhere, and so fall an easy prey to the gladiators of the Press.

The position appears to me to be this: technically, the Academy is, I believe, unassailable. In the declared opinion of a most competent judge, the late Lord Davey, the Academy has throughout acted in strict accordance with the terms of Chantrey's will; and in regard to the impasse or deadlock with which we are threatened, it appears that it is not in fact possible for the Trustees of the National Gallery or of the Tate Gallery to decline to accept the Chantrey purchases. Lord Curzon, in Appendix No. I, appears to rely on the evidence of Sir Edward Poynter, who gave his opinion that there is no obligation on the Trustees to hang the Chantrey purchases; but I understand that Sir Edward asked to be allowed to have a proof of his evidence for correction, and that his request was refused. A similar request to the Committee of 1904 was granted at once. The actual position is given in the information very frankly supplied by Lord Curzon himself in this Appendix. When, in

1897, the Chantrey Collection was handed over by the President and Council to the Government, the arrangement formally agreed to was that the pictures should be placed "under the charge of the Trustees and Director of the National Gallery", who "would hang them as a separate collection". In 1898 the Treasury suggested that powers of selection and refusal should be given to the Director and Trustees of the National Gallery (under 3, 19 & 20 Vict. c. 29). The Academy declined to agree to this as being in contravention of Chantrey's will; and in November 1898 the Treasury accepted the Academy's view, and wrote to the Trustees of the National Gallery that "no power of selection or elimination is claimed on behalf of the Trustees and Director of the National Gallery in respect of such (Chantrey) pictures and works of art". The Trustees of the National Gallery, November 29, 1898, expressed their concurrence with the above reply. In 1907 the Trustees of the National Gallery endeavoured to get "the right of selection and elimination with regard to Chantrey pictures given into their custody" "restored" to them, but the Treasury informed them that the arrangement made in 1897 could not be altered. The Treasury offered to support a suggestion that the Academy should allow the National Gallery Board some voice in the selection of pictures purchased, but the Board declined the suggestion. "There", as Lord Curzon says, "the matter rested, and has rested ever since." In other words, the Trustees and Director, whether of the National Gallery or of the Tate, have no power to decline to accept or to hang the Chantrey purchases.

Though, however, its position may be technically unassailable, I submit that for the following reasons the Academy should seriously consider the situation, and be prepared with its own policy:

(a) The Academy has administered the Trust conscientiously; but owing to this very conscientiousness, to the conditions of the will, and possibly inadvertence on the part of the Academy, the results are not wholly satisfactory; artists whose work ought to be in the Collection for one reason or another have been left out, and the tendency to concentrate attention on our own Exhibition can hardly be avoided under existing conditions.

(b) Further, it does seem anomalous that the Trustees and Director of the Tate Gallery should have no voice whatever in the selection of a large portion of the paintings that they have to hang on its walls. Mr. Aitken, the present Director, who gave his evidence quite fairly before the Committee of the Trustees of the National Gallery, was tenacious on this point, and could hardly be otherwise, because under present conditions the Director has no control at all over an important section of the Gallery under his charge. The solution of the Committee of the Trustees of the National Gallery is the wholesale transfer of the Chantrey Bequest to the Trustees and Director of the Tate Gallery. The suggestion, as I have endeavoured to show, is unscrupulous, and not only unnecessary, but extremely dangerous; but in view of the fact that the Tate Gallery has to house the Chantrey Collection, it appears to me only fair that the Gallery should have some representative on the purchasing body, and I suggest that the Director of the Tate Gallery be added to the Committee of Purchase, as an assessor to represent the Gallery, and to advise the Committee from this point of view.

(c) The custom that has grown up of making at any rate the most important purchases just before the opening of the Summer Exhibition must limit the field of purchase, and tends to isolate the Academy from other artistic societies, instead of bringing it into touch with them. The Academy ought to be cognisant of all good work that is about at the time, whether within its walls or without.

(d) The organization of the purchasing Committee is too loose, and its responsibility too vague and indefinite. Members should be told off to inspect specified exhibitions, and they should be responsible if fine work has been overlooked in any of the exhibitions allotted to them. It seems to be pretty generally agreed that a committee of ten, with a chairman, is in any case too large to form a satisfactory purchasing body. The Committee of 1904 recommended that a committee of three be appointed, consisting of the President, one Member of Council, and one Associate, and that they should hold office for five years. This has not been carried out, for the reason that it was in conflict with Chantrey's will, and the five years' office against the Constitution of the Academy; but it was admitted that it would greatly improve the effective value of the purchasing

Committee. It would define the responsibility of selection, so that it would become a real thing; it would extend the electorate, so that the basis of support of the Committee would be broader, and it would provide a more practicable and effective machinery of purchase. A small committee such as this would make it part of its official business to visit all serious exhibitions of modern British art within range. Further, as recommended by the Committee in 1904, an organization might well be established by which other Societies kept in touch with the Royal Academy, and reported to it the existence of works which, in their opinion, ought to be considered by the Committee with a view to purchase under the Trust. In regard to the Royal Scottish Academy, it might be possible to delegate to its President the right of submitting a fixed proportion of pictures for consideration by the purchasing Committee of the Chantrey Trust.

(e) It would follow from this that the habit of making the purchases in May would have to be abandoned. Purchases would have to be made from time to time during the year, or accumulated for two or more years at the discretion of the Committee.

I therefore venture to submit the following suggestions for the consideration of the Royal Academy Committee:

1. That the recommendations of the Committee of 1904 be carried out by the Academy, with the necessary modifications in regard to tenure of office, and that the Director of the Tate Gallery be added as assessor or adviser to the Committee of selection and purchase as reorganized.
2. That it be a recognized part of the official duties of this Committee to visit other galleries, instead of the informal visits hitherto customary.
3. That outside Societies be invited to report to the Academy for consideration the existence of works which such Societies think worthy of purchase under the Trust, and that a scheme of organization for this purpose be considered.
4. That the practice of making the greater part of the Chantrey purchases prior to the opening of the Annual Exhibition of the Royal Academy be abandoned, and that the time of purchase be extended so far as practicable throughout the year.
5. That legal opinion be now taken as to the effect of these

proposals on the Trust, and as to the legal procedure necessary to carry them into effect.

I submit that the Academy ought to be prepared with a definite policy and proposals, in view of the altered conditions that have arisen since Chantrey made his will. Though its position may be technically unassailable, it is no longer right for the Academy to sit passively within its legal entrenchments. I submit that the time has come for the Academy to bring forward its own solution of the difficulties that have arisen, and to assert its rightful claim to be the centre and the leader of all serious movements in the Art of this country, not excluding "those manifestations of Art of a very extreme and absolute character, which in time do not seem extreme, but seem the right thing".

REGINALD BLOMFIELD

51 FROGNAL, HAMPSTEAD,

*May 22, 1917.*

NOTE.—I have reprinted this pamphlet exactly as it was written fifteen years ago, but I should add that the views of my friend MacColl have mellowed since those strenuous times, and that he now takes a much kindlier view of the Royal Academy and all its works. The suggestions made by me, stated on p. 279, were, in fact, carried out under the Presidency of Aston Webb.

R. B

## · APPENDIX II

*AN ADDRESS GIVEN AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY,  
MAY 1918*

### *CONSIDERATIONS ON THE POLICY AND POSITION OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY, 1918*

“ON ne peut dissimuler qu’il y avait dans ces organisations disparates, dans ces inégalités de droits pour les catégories diverses d’Académiciens appelés à concourir aux mêmes travaux, dans les rivalités et les froissements qui en devaient naître . . . et qui permettait d’écarter le mérite reconnu par les meilleurs juges, des arguments pour ceux qui cherchaient en 1789 des abus à corriger, des réformes à faire.”

In these words an able writer summed up the position of the old French Academies immediately before the French Revolution. At that date the French Academy of Painting and Sculpture was divided into three camps: the monopolists, who hugged their privileges and declined any reforms; those who pleaded for a more generous policy; and those who, like David the Painter, wished to destroy this “Bastille of French Art”. The Academies made a panic-stricken attempt to put their house in order, but it was too late, and though they were reconstituted in another form two years later, all the French Academies, including the Academy at Rome, were abolished in 1793.

Without contemplating a similar fate for the Royal Academy, there is a certain analogy between our position to-day and that of the French Academies in 1789. We, too, have our Old Guard and our Reformers, though the Academy is too vital and its Members too loyal to include in its ranks a wrecker like Louis David. We, too, are living in a time of stress, scarcely less strenuous than the days of 1793, and fraught with consequences not less momentous. It is impossible to forecast what will happen after the war, but it is pretty certain that there will be

a general stock-taking, and a great deal of reorganization and reconstruction all round. Further, it is no use blinking the fact that the Royal Academy has lost ground during the last twenty-five years. It has been belaboured by the Press; it appears to have lost the confidence of Governments; and Members themselves are not entirely satisfied with the condition of affairs within the Academy or with the policy that has generally guided its action in recent years. The time seems to have come for the overhauling of our position and policy by ourselves, before that process is undertaken by outsiders with little understanding of our circumstances and no sympathy with our difficulties. It is time to ask ourselves why we have lost ground; why it is that we have incurred this violent animosity; why one Commission, though it acquitted us of any suspicion of dishonesty, criticized our methods unfavourably, and another Commission, or rather Committee, was openly hostile; why in recent years the Government has practically ignored us? There may be obvious reasons, such as the liability of all Academies to be shot at, the malice and wickedness of journalists, the indifference to the Arts, varied by spurts of ill-advised interference, which is the tradition of the State in this country; and there may be particular reasons, such as the complete break-up of old traditions of technique, the multiplication of artistic societies and exhibitions, and the increasing tendency to one-man shows, which distract attention from the work of the central body. But a great traditional Institution, such as the Royal Academy, can only lose its place of honour if there is something wrong with its conduct of affairs, if it has lost touch, if its general attitude to the public is somewhere at fault; and it becomes an imperative duty to examine the situation, and see whether the policy which has governed the Academy for a generation or more does not need revision, if the Academy is to recover its position as the recognized head of the art of this country. It is the belief of some of us that such a revision is a vital necessity. We have come to the parting of the ways, and shall have to make up our minds whether we mean to go up the hill or down. The following notes have been put together in order to help to place the issues squarely on the table. It is difficult to do so without controversial statements, but it is better to have it out among ourselves than to wait till the Academy is thrown to the wolves. Nearly all the suggestions

put forward have been discussed by Members informally at one time or another, but though spasmodic attempts at reform have been made from time to time, things have swung back into the old rut, and are likely to remain there, unless the points at issue are clearly realized and dealt with as a whole on a considered and consecutive policy.

Criticism has in the main been directed to the following points: The general policy and attitude of the Academy during the last twenty-five years, the Summer Exhibition, the Schools, the constitution and procedure of the Council, and the position of the Associates. The attempts at improvement that have been made in recent years have to some extent failed of their purpose because they have been made piecemeal, and have not proceeded from any real consensus of opinion as to first principles. In the reshuffling of the cards that is now imminent, clear ideas as to the position and function of the Royal Academy are of vital importance. We ought to have definite conceptions of what as a Society we set out to do, and the best methods of doing it.

## I. GENERAL POLICY

The general policy of the Academy, its attitude to the outside public, has in the past been too exclusive. Till recently it was characterized by a certain *morgue*, which by no means conduced to its popularity, and made enemies who did not hesitate to place the worst possible construction on all its actions. The Academy lost the confidence of the public because it kept them at arm's length, and did not itself sufficiently trust the public. It is absurd to attribute to the Academy bad faith and lack of integrity, as hostile critics have done, but there have been times when it might seem to an impartial observer that the Academy concentrated its attention too closely on its internal affairs, rather than on its great responsibilities to the public and the State. From heedlessness rather than intention, it has sometimes seemed to regard the Summer Exhibition as the final cause of its existence. Highly important as that Exhibition undoubtedly is, it is only a part of the work for which the Academy exists. That the Exhibition and the work of our Schools go hand in hand, the one the complement and completion of the other, is a point of view that till recently seems to have been somewhat forgotten. Yet it is of vital importance,



if the Academy as a body is to play its proper part in the State machine, and this was clearly realized by the men who founded the Academy.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of its foundation, the "promotion of the arts of design", cannot be regarded as being fully dealt with by the Summer Exhibition, nor can the Academy logically regard itself as outside the range of State control. It is true that it runs its Schools and Exhibitions, provides its Scholarships and Pensions, and the maintenance of its great establishment out of its own resources, but it has in the past received the assistance of the State, and for the satisfactory continuance of its educational work may have to come to the State again. The conditions of its foundation place the Academy in a different position from that of other societies. It must not be forgotten that in its early years the King was "graciously pleased to pay all deficiencies" out of his private purse, that the Academy has, through its President, direct access to the Sovereign, and that the immensely valuable site on which our buildings stand was presented to the Academy by the State.<sup>2</sup> We are, in fact, a great State institution, and instead of shrinking from that position, we ought surely to accept it to the full with all the responsibilities it entails—the finest School in the country, the active leadership in all matters of Art, ready sympathy with other societies and schools of thought, and loyal co-operation with the State in the promotion of the Arts. Opportunities of such action ought to be welcomed, instead of being turned down as not part of our business. It is probable that the want of confidence shown towards the Academy by the Government is due, rightly or wrongly, to a belief that the Academy is narrow and unsympathetic, and only concerned with its private affairs. That the great services of the Academy in the past have not been fairly recognized, and that the Government in recent years has treated the Academy badly, may be undeniable, but we ought to consider how far we have brought this on ourselves by mistakes in policy, by keeping too much to ourselves and by shrinking from coming out into the open. It is true that the Government has persistently ignored the Academy in artistic matters

<sup>1</sup> Of the twenty-seven clauses of the Instrument, eleven are devoted to the Schools as against one dealing with the Exhibition.

<sup>2</sup> It was, however, only presented to the Academy in compensation for its dispossession from its quarters in the National Gallery, and on condition that the Academy undertook the whole cost of building its galleries at Burlington House, a very costly undertaking.

of public interest, but our answer should be to combine with societies such as the British Academy in representing to Governments that, in matters of special knowledge, it is their duty to consult the bodies officially representative of that special knowledge, instead of relying on the advice of casual laymen. So far we have found ourselves out-manœuvred at nearly every point. Again and again we have been too late, because we have failed to study powerful tendencies outside our walls which ultimately result in far-reaching public policy, and because we have made insufficient, or at least unsuccessful, efforts to place ourselves abreast of public opinion. We shall have to go out into the market-place, like everybody else.

The function of a Royal Academy should surely be, not only to maintain the highest standard of effort and technical attainment, but also to act as leader in all serious movements in the Arts, and to play the rôle of a wise and tolerant trustee. The enemies of the Academy say that instead of being the mother of the Arts it is the stepmother, and they base their accusation on the absence of sustained effort on the part of the Academy to place itself in touch with other artistic societies and with outside artists. Art is a losing cause in modern civilization in any case, and the only way to recover its position is for all artists to pull together. The Academy should be the centre and rallying-point of this effort, and instead of regarding each other as rivals, all serious artistic societies should be loyal allies. Members themselves are not sufficiently in touch with each other. In the reign of Louis XIV, when the old French Academies had not yet lost their initial enthusiasm and were doing excellent work, frequent conferences were held at which members discussed artistic questions, and the results of their deliberations were recorded in the minutes.<sup>1</sup> Now, the Academy is not a debating society, but meetings of its Members are much too rare. Some Members are never seen except on varnishing days, and there have been occasions on which there was not a quorum in General Assembly. More frequent opportunities of meeting and discussion would probably remove many misunderstandings, enable proposed changes to be more thoroughly considered and brought to their real proportions, and in this way establish that mutual confidence without which no

<sup>1</sup> To this day ordinary meetings of the Académie des Beaux-Arts are held every Saturday.

real *esprit de corps* is possible. It is doubtful whether the Annual Report is sufficient to keep Members adequately informed as to what is going on. Members who are not on the Council only hear of important questions after they have been settled; and though this may be inevitable in societies numbering hundreds or thousands of members, it could surely be avoided in an Academy of forty members by some such arrangement as a monthly bulletin.

## II. THE EXHIBITIONS

In regard to the Exhibitions, the Academy has certainly suffered by its own generosity. Whereas other societies only exhibit the work of their members, the Royal Academy is open to all comers, and it has rendered its Exhibitions less attractive than they should be by extending a too generous sympathy to inferior work. It is no kindness to artists of little ability to encourage them to persevere in a hopeless career, and to do so places the Academy in a wrong position in regard to the public. The Summer Exhibition exists for the exhibition and sale of works of art, but it also exists as the visible embodiment of what the Academy believes to be the right and the best thing in art, and its object is also to set a standard of current art. It is impossible that it should fulfil this purpose if the standard is lowered below a certain point. The strength of a chain is its weakest link, and if the standard of attainment in many of the works exhibited is a low one, the result is that, in spite of many isolated works of great excellence, the average of the Exhibitions as a whole may be lower than that of private exhibiting societies. The Exhibition, therefore, instead of stimulating the art of the country may have actually the opposite effect, because it may encourage bad artists to persevere in their futile endeavours, and the work of good artists is lost in a wilderness of incompetence. In regard to the Academy itself an "omnibus" Exhibition tends to lower its prestige, and stands in the way of its carrying out one of the principal functions of an Academy, namely, the maintenance of a high standard of technical excellence and of high ideals in art.<sup>1</sup> As a mere matter of business,

<sup>1</sup> Though there is a greater quantity of good work in the Academy Summer Exhibition than in the exhibitions of all the other societies, there is also a much greater quantity of bad, and it is by this last that we are judged.

it is admitted by everyone that a limited exhibition of well-selected works is more attractive than walls plastered with pictures, a legacy from the old days of Somerset House and the early days of exhibitions, when there were no adequate galleries in which to hang the pictures. It has been suggested that the number of works which Members are entitled to exhibit should be reduced from six to four. The advantage of this is, however, open to question, as it is certainly the fact that the bulk of the best work in the Exhibitions is contributed by Members. Another suggestion has been made that artists of known ability should be invited to contribute works to the Exhibition, practically on the same terms as Members. Provided that such invitations are treated as an occasional compliment, and not as a permanent privilege, there is much to be said for this.

With the limited space at our disposal it seems to be impracticable to admit any extensive exhibition of what are generally described as the arts and crafts, though small and beautiful objects such as jewellery and articles which can be shown in cases might well be exhibited in the picture galleries. "The arts of design" are not limited to the arts of painting, sculpture and architecture, and the Academy ought to show its recognition of this. The wisdom of the decision to allow the Arts and Crafts Society to hold an exhibition within the walls of the Academy has been justified. Even our most jealous critics admitted that it showed an openness of mind and a width of sympathy the existence of which they had pronounced inconceivable. The precedent of this and of the Black and White Exhibition might well be followed more extensively in Autumn Exhibitions.

The constitution of the Hanging Committee has long been a burning question. Rule X, Sect. VII, lays it down that "a Committee consisting of five painters, one sculptor and one architect, shall be chosen out of the Council for the arrangement of the various portions of the Exhibition", and the entire selection and control of the Exhibition rests with this Committee and the Council. I may point out that in this regard our method is precisely that once followed by the French Academy in the disastrous days that preceded the overthrow of the Classic revivalists by Delacroix and the Romantics. From 1816 till 1848 the jury of the Salon was composed exclusively of Academicians, and of this state of things a modern French writer says, "Jamais

pareille tyrannie n'avait été permise". The jury is now elected by the whole body of the exhibitors.

Without going to this extreme, it has to be pointed out that our method works badly in several ways. In regard to sculpture and architecture the responsibility seems too great to devolve on a single individual. In regard to painting, though the numerical representation is adequate, the Associates, who are a most important part of the exhibiting effective, have no voice at all in the selection of the *personnel*. Moreover, our system of mechanical rotation makes any consecutive standard or policy impossible. If one Hanging Committee goes forward, its successor may go back, and to the educated public, however much it may admire the work of individual artists, the Academy appears to be in a perpetual and paralysing condition of see-saw. The result is that as a body it makes no dint on public opinion. Nor can it be said that hanging committees appointed on our method really represent the main body of opinion of the Academicians and Associates, and it does not seem possible, to render that opinion effective without introducing the electoral element. Possibly the solution would be to supplement the Hanging Committee appointed by the Council by the addition of Members elected by the whole body of Academicians and Associates out of the whole body.

### III. THE SCHOOLS

Attempts have been made from time to time to improve the Schools, but it has to be admitted that owing to altered conditions they no longer satisfactorily fulfil the purpose for which they were originally founded. In the earlier days of the Academy, its School was the only organized centre of training in the three Arts, and so long as there was no wide diversity of technique, and the number of those who set out to make the practice of the Arts their career in life was limited, our methods, premises and equipment were adequate for their purpose, and served it in an admirable manner. But these things have changed materially and with great rapidity in the last fifty years.

(a) The provision of State-aided art schools throughout the country of more or less excellence has changed the situation. Art is no better than it was, but it is far more widely spread,

and the standard of educational equipment is much higher than it used to be. The result is that while our School premises remain as they were—too small, ill-lit and unattractive—other schools have far outstripped us in equipment, as, for example, the Architectural School of the Royal College, in comparison with the Architectural School of the Royal Academy. Yet it is impossible for us to enlarge our School premises or improve them materially, and thus we are up against an impasse in any attempt to develop our Schools.

(b) The art-training provided by the State has succeeded in producing great numbers of imperfectly trained students, and here again the Royal Academy suffers from its own generosity. Our training is given gratuitously; it ought, therefore, to be open to us to make our standard of admission as high as we like, but in practice students who have been only partially trained in Schools of Art are admitted on too low a standard. This has happened repeatedly in the Architectural School. Time has to be wasted by the Visitors on students who are never likely to become good artists, and students of real capacity not only lose some of the personal care that might be given them, but their standard of work is insensibly lowered by the general average of poor technique. The Royal Academy School ought to be a Final School, to which only students of proved capacity and attainment should be admitted.

(c) The system of Visitors by rotation, which worked well enough when there was one generally recognized standard of technique, does not seem calculated to produce the best results in the wide diversity of modern practice. No sooner has one Visitor completed his month than he is succeeded by another whose views on art may be entirely different. The effect on an immature student must be simply bewildering, and the good that either Visitor might do individually in a longer course is neutralized. Yet it is difficult to see how this state of things can be altered in our Schools as they are at present constituted.

(d) The Academy Schools are very costly. In 1913, when conditions were normal, the total expenditure on the Schools, including the Keeper's salary, was £4062 10s. 5½d., and this was not a Gold Medal year. Of this sum about £700 was spent on fittings and repairs, about £320 on the Architectural School, about £650 on sculpture, about £1650 on painting and the

balance in prizes. There were at that date 78 students in the Painting School, 12 in the Sculpture School and 63 in the Architectural School. Leaving the Architectural School out of account as only an evening school, this works out per head at these figures approximately:

Painting Students <sup>1</sup>	.	.	£21 per head	.
Sculpture	„	.	£54	„

And this is a very low estimate. It is very doubtful whether, in any case, the Academy will be able to maintain this expenditure, and still more so, whether the results obtained justify the cost.

To summarize the position. The Schools are costly, yet they are not adequate for their purpose, and it is impossible for the Academy to develop them in our existing premises and under our present system. Other schools with less advantages are more popular, and unless we can make our School the most efficient in the country, and so develop and improve it that admission to the School is regarded by all the best students as the aim and object of their previous training, there is grave danger of our School being superseded by other and more vigorous institutions. The whole question of the Schools should be considered in relation not only to the Academy, but also to the training in art provided by the State. The Academy School should be the final and completing school of the whole State system, and the Academy should co-operate with the State, inviting its help and contributing its own, so that this School, with the necessary modifications, should occupy a position analogous to that of the *École des Beaux-Arts* in France. The organization of such a school is a difficult matter. Considerable progress was made with it in 1914-15. Since then, owing to the war, the scheme then put forward has been in abeyance, but it is urgent that it should be taken up again, and dealt with in a broad, comprehensive and statesman-like spirit.

#### IV. THE COUNCIL

Complaints have been made by Members that reforms proposed, and even agreed to at the time, have sometimes dropped

<sup>1</sup> The number of Students passing through their Studentship on December 31, 1913, was 153, viz. Painting 78, Sculpture 12, Architecture 63.

out of sight, and nothing more has been heard of them. Successive Councils seem sometimes unconscious of what their predecessors have done, and in the result no steady consecutive policy seems attainable. The reason in the main is, that there is no permanent body of opinion, with the exception of the three officers. Members only serve on the Council for two years, they are not eligible for re-election, and probably do not come on the Council again for another five to seven years. On the other hand, it is desirable that all Members should pass through the Council. Moreover, if Members were eligible for re-election at the end of their two years, it would scarcely be possible to avoid the danger of permanent cliques. It is possible that the difficulty might be met by the election of additional Members to serve for three years, in order to strengthen the permanent element on the Council, but probably the best solution would be a larger use of standing committees than has been the practice hitherto. The only standing committee is the Finance Committee, but the not less important matters of the Exhibition and the Schools are only dealt with from time to time by intermittent committees, which forget the labours of their predecessors, with the result that there is no steady progress or continuity of policy. Standing committees ought to be constituted:

- (a) For the Schools and education;
- (b) For the Exhibitions;
- (c) To watch questions of public policy in which the Academy is concerned, and in which it may be its duty to take corporate action.

These committees should be composed of Members of Council and non-members of Council, elected by the General Assembly in proportions to be determined. The nominations of Members of Council should be made and seconded by Members of Council. The Committees would have to report to the Council, and it would be for the Council and the General Assembly to decide what action be taken on their reports. In a society with limited numbers, such as the Royal Academy, more work ought to be done for the Academy by the Members, and it seems reasonable to suggest that if a Member is unable to take up the duties of his highly honourable position, and persistently fails to do so, he should be placed on the retired list, and make room for somebody else who can. The existing rule in regard to contributions to the Exhibitions is evidence that the



necessity of some such procedure as this has been recognized in the past, and it is common knowledge among Members that the attendance at General Assemblies has in recent years been very casual. Membership of the Royal Academy carries with it real responsibilities as well as valuable privileges, and the one should not be accepted without the other. In this connection the question of an age-limit might be considered. The rules seem to contemplate some relaxation of work and easier conditions after the age of sixty. Though as a general rule Academicians enjoy a hale old age, they cannot expect to be so vigorous at eighty and over as they were in their younger days, and they are necessarily precluded by physical infirmities from taking the same active share in the work of the Academy. It would seem reasonable that no office of the Academy should be held, say, after the age of eighty, and that after that age, Academicians should be placed on the list of Retired Academicians. An extension of the privileges of the latter might be considered at the same time.

In regard to the office of President, the Instrument lays it down that he shall be elected annually, and this practice prevails to this day. The result has been, however, that except in abnormal circumstances it has been to all intents a life office. The advantage of this in the past has been a definite and accepted leadership. On the other hand, the constitution of the Royal Academy is an oligarchy. Its parallel in history would be the Government of the Venetian Republic; that is to say, in theory power resides equally in all its Members. In view of the rapidly changing conditions of modern art, it may be worth consideration whether it might not be desirable to hold the election to this office every five years, as is done in the case of the Keeper and the Treasurer, instead of annually. The President in office would be eligible for re-election, but if a change was found to be necessary in the interests of the Society, it would be more practicable and far less invidious at the end of five years than at the end of one. A term of five years would provide an adequate period in which to carry through any definite policy, and it may be found that a limited period of office may be better adapted to meet the altered conditions and ideals that are likely to prevail after the conclusion of peace. It is evident that in the first instance the founders of the Academy did not intend a life tenure of the office of Presi-

dent, and they seem to have been rather shy of investing him with any controlling authority.

## V. THE ASSOCIATES

It has long been felt by Associates that their position is unsatisfactory:

(a) They contribute largely to the success of the Exhibition, and take their full share in the working of the Schools. Yet they have no voice in the management of the Schools, and a very small one in connection with the Exhibition. In both cases they ought to be represented on the Standing Committees. This might be done by giving the Associates power to elect representatives on those Committees subject to confirmation by the General Assembly.

(b) The Associates are kept in ignorance of the proceedings of the Academy, with the result that instead of being active champions of that body, with the best intentions, they are unable to lend it effectual support, and a smouldering sense of lack of confidence is not calculated to promote *esprit de corps*.

It has often been suggested that the Annual Report of the Academy should be sent to Associates as well as Academicians. This would at least remove a good deal of misunderstanding, and establish better and closer relations between the two classes. The old Academy of France went under because the senior men insisted on reserving its privileges to themselves. That there should be a differentiation between Academicians and Associates is necessary unless the entire constitution of the Academy is to be upset, but within the limits of that constitution it might be possible to improve the position of the Associates, and give them a more responsible share in the work of the Academy.

(c) It is practically impossible for every member of the Associate class to attain the rank of full member, and it becomes a question whether, in the interests both of the Associates and of the Academy, it would not be desirable to increase the number of Associates, so that instead of the Associateship being regarded merely as a transition stage on the road to full membership, it should be regarded, as it is entitled, as "a degree" conferring a definite status on the holder.

The advantages of this would be:

(1) That when it is recognized that a proportion of the Associates cannot become full members, there would be nothing invidious in an Associate remaining in that class;

(2) It would extend the influence of the Academy by including in its ranks men who, however well qualified, have little chance of entering those ranks under present conditions; and

(3) It would enable the Academy to include among its members artists who do admirable work in various branches of art, but who, owing to the fact that they are not specifically painters, sculptors, architects or engravers, have again and again appeared to be ineligible for election.

The work of some of our book illustrators and black-and-white men, such glass-work as the windows of the Lady Chapel at Gloucester, the decorations and furniture designed under William Morris and by living designers and the like, surely deserve recognition in an Academy founded to "promote the arts of design" (the Instrument). Yet, with our present limited number of Associates, it is impossible for the Academy to extend that recognition. For some reason, never ascertained, the number of Associates has always been limited to thirty or thereabouts, but thirty is given as a minimum, and there appears to be no reason, constitutional or otherwise, why that number should not be increased to include representatives of arts other than painting, sculpture and architecture, reserving the rank of Academician for painters, sculptors and architects.

The view that the Academy exists mainly for painting (the painting of easel pictures) has arisen from the undoubted fact that a great part of the resources of the Academy has been built up by the exhibition of those pictures, but it is a view that pushed to extremes would reduce the Academy to the level of other societies which do exist, quite legitimately, for the sole purpose of exhibition and sale of pictures. The rôle of the Royal Academy is a far higher one. The importance that education plays in its work has been already referred to, and the time has surely come when the Academy must look still further afield. It must take into account all the Arts worthy of consideration, and place itself at their head. No Academy can rest long on its oars. Steady progress is the condition of its existence, and if it is objected that "The Instrument" blocks the way, the provisions of that famous document can be "altered or added to, provided that the Assembly so resolves and the Sovereign

approves.”<sup>1</sup> Methods that were reasonable enough under different conditions are now out of date. On the other hand, if the position is squarely faced, if the Academy sets its house in order, and instead of banging and bolting the doors, throws them open to all that is best in the art of the time, it will have an opportunity, which may never occur again, not only of regaining the prestige of its splendid past, but of contributing a unique and invaluable service to the welfare of the State.

REGINALD BLOMFIELD

51 FROGNAL, HAMPSTEAD,  
May 1918.

<sup>1</sup> The late H. T. Wells, R.A., *Memorandum on the Constitution of the Royal Academy*, 1896.

## APPENDIX III

### *AN ADDRESS ON WATERLOO BRIDGE, GIVEN TO THE CONSERVATIVE TRANSPORT COMMITTEE AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 1932*

I HAVE been asked to give you as briefly as I can the reasons why Waterloo Bridge should not be destroyed. I am sorry to find myself again in opposition to the views of the L.C.C. My relations with the Council have always been friendly and courteous, but this is a case of *amicus Plato sed magis amica veritas*. If in a matter of vital public importance one has a definite opinion based on considered grounds, I regard it as one's duty as a citizen, and more particularly as a citizen of London, to come out into the open, say what one thinks, and risk the consequences; and before I go into practical points I should like to remove one rather serious misconception as to the nature of the opposition to the L.C.C. scheme of a new six-line bridge. It has been suggested that this is only due to architects. Mr. Morrison recently said that he was not going to let the R.I.B.A., or anybody else, decide for him what was beautiful or not. He knew what he liked. Mr. Morrison is a very able man but he is not an engineer or even an architect, and I think he has forgotten that other people as well as Mr. Morrison know what they like, and many of them do not like this new bridge at all. They also have a claim to be heard, more especially when, as will be seen from the Memorial published in *The Times* this morning, those others include some of the best representatives of knowledge and intelligence in this country. In their opinion Waterloo Bridge, as seen from Hungerford Bridge with the river running under it, Somerset House to the left and the great dome of St. Paul's in the distance, makes perhaps the noblest piece of river scenery to be found anywhere in the world, and this has been recognized

by all who care for these things since the day when Waterloo Bridge was opened 115 years ago. A speaker in the House of Lords last week quoted Ruskin's description of the bridge as "a gloomy and hollow heap of wedged blocks of blind granite", about the most idiotic description of a living bridge which it would be possible to conceive; but the speaker omitted to give the context in which this passage occurred. Canova, on the other hand, said it was worth coming to England if only to see Waterloo Bridge, and it is held by those who care for these things that Waterloo Bridge is one of the masterpieces of the world. Mr. Morrison cares nothing for this opinion, and prefers his own, but the objections to the destruction of the bridge are not a matter only of opinion, they are based on hard facts; and it is on these facts that the issue must be decided.

First, there is the obvious congestion of traffic that must result if a ~~six~~-line bridge is built. Since their proposals for a Charing Cross Bridge have been rejected the L.C.C. have assumed that no bridge will ever be built at Charing Cross, and Sir Percy Simmons stated this in terms when he met this Committee last week. The L.C.C. have also rejected the proposal for a bridge in the neighbourhood of the Temple. On this assumption they appear to contemplate making Waterloo Bridge do the work of two bridges, and argue that in doing so they show a wise foresight for the future a hundred years hence. A hundred years hence everybody may be flying, and I would ask them how about the next twenty-five years? What is going to happen to the traffic after it has left the bridges north and south? In a report of the special Improvement Committee of the L.C.C. in April 1924, I find the following passage: ". . . after removing the defective piers and substituting new ones, and utilizing the remainder of the superstructure, *the character and identity of the existing bridge would be preserved in the widened structure*, a consideration which the Committee regard as of the *first importance*". What was true in 1924 is true in 1932.

It was suggested at one time that it might be relieved by a subway down which traffic might disappear in Wellington Street and emerge somewhere in Aldwych or Kingsway. I do not know if, as a matter of fact, such a subway is possible at all having regard to the existing tramway tunnel coming from the Embankment, but even if it is possible, this would simply disgorge traffic into Kingsway and make the crossing at High

Holborn worse than ever, and it would do nothing for traffic turning eastward along the Strand.

When the Advisory Committee appointed by the L.C.C. to consider a bridge at Charing Cross was sitting, it was taken as an axiom that where a main thoroughfare crosses another there must be a "Place", with not less than 150 feet uninterrupted kerb between the points at which the streets enter the "Place". If this was done at the intersection of Wellington Street and the Strand, the south-west corner would have to be shaved off up to Savoy Street, the north-west corner up to half-way up Wellington Street cutting through the Lyceum Theatre, and the greater part of Inveresk House would have to be removed, and even if this were done, there still remains the necessity of a wide thoroughfare going north, and of the widening of Waterloo Road going south. It is so obvious that a wider bridge is useless, unless there is a free outlet for traffic after it has crossed the bridge, that I need not labour the point; but in the L.C.C. scheme of a six-line bridge no provision whatever is made for getting rid of this traffic.

Then there is the vitally important question of cost. I find it difficult to disentangle the various estimates and figures. The Chairman of the L.C.C. Improvements Committee informed his Council that the estimated cost of removing the old bridge and constructing a new six-line bridge would be £1,295,000, and that this was only £214,000 more than the cost of reconditioning the existing bridge and widening it to take four lines of traffic. The Royal Commission on Cross River Traffic estimated the cost of reconditioning and widening the bridge at £860,000, and that was considered by engineers to be a liberal estimate; taking that figure and adding to it £214,000, the total would appear to be not some £1,300,000 but £1,074,000, and the extra cost £440,000 not £214,000. But taking the estimated cost at £1,295,000, Lord Plymouth informed the House of Lords that this included a sum of £275,000 for the demolition of the existing bridge. A competent and experienced engineer has put the cost of demolition at just double this amount. Both figures must of course be speculative, but, in view of the unusual difficulty of the work, it would be wiser to base calculations of cost on the higher rather than the lower figure. The work of demolition will be a very difficult and, in the opinion of some engineers, an extremely dangerous operation, especially to navigation, owing to the risk

of the arches collapsing during the process of removal. The bridge is known to be very strongly constructed. Britton and Pugin, in their description of Waterloo Bridge, written at the time, say, "In constructing the arches the beds and joints were worked with the greatest care, and to give additional security, four chain bars of iron were worked transversely into each arch. . . . In building the arches the stones were rammed together with very considerable force." Waterloo Bridge is probably about the best-constructed stone bridge ever built, as indeed is shown by the present behaviour of the arches, and the fact that the bridge has not settled materially since the disastrous "remedial" measures of 1924, taken by the L.C.C. with the approval of Sir Basil Mott and Sir Maurice Fitzmaurice, were abandoned. Lord Mount Temple quoted the authority of those eminent engineers, but he seems to have overlooked the fact that the only result of the grouting of the foundations was to disintegrate the gravel round the timber piles, with the result that in a few days the piers settled another 8 in. As soon as "the remedial measures" were abandoned, the subsidence stopped, and there has been no material settlement since. Unkind people say that the decision of the L.C.C. to destroy the bridge rather suggests that of a doctor who, having half killed his patient, decides to finish him off in order to conceal all trace of his own incompetence. The work of demolition would have to be done under extremely difficult conditions. Not only would there be a risk of the collapse of the whole bridge into the river, but the foundations of the four piers of a new five-arch bridge would come in a different place from the foundations both of the old bridge and the existing temporary bridge, and it is difficult to see how all this work in different places can go on without blocking the navigation in the river and traffic on the Embankment. In any case, the inherent difficulties under which the work would be done must add considerably to the cost.

No provision has been made in the estimate for a second temporary bridge. Yet, as Lord Crawford has pointed out, it is certain that the present 18-feet temporary bridge cannot deal with all the cross-river traffic at this point for an indeterminate period of from six to eight years, the time estimated as necessary for the completion of the new bridge. The Government has boldly offered to take on 60 per cent of the cost, but the taxpayer would like to know definitely what the cost will be before



he puts his hand into his pocket; and quite apart from the cost of the new bridge, there looms in the near future the inevitable cost of improving the approaches to the bridge, which must run into some millions. When schemes for the Charing Cross Bridge were being considered, ample provision was made in both cases for approaches to the bridge on both sides of the river. No details of the estimates were given, but I do not think I shall be far out if I say that in those estimates a sum of not less than ten millions was included for dealing with the approaches. Not one penny is provided for the approaches in this scheme for a new six-line Waterloo Bridge. Yet the whole justification of a new six-line bridge is based on the assumption that it will have to do the work of two bridges. If a very large expenditure on approaches was necessary in the case of a new bridge at Charing Cross, when there would still be the existing Waterloo Bridge, how much more would that expenditure be necessary when there would be only one bridge instead of two? On the precedent of Charing Cross that expenditure would run into several millions, and this ought to be clearly realized and taken into account before the tax-payer is called upon to find 60 per cent of the cost.

Sir Percy Simmons and Lord Plymouth, by way of reassuring the public, say that there will be no great difficulty in purchasing the land for street improvements, because they know all about the owners. The point is, not the manner of purchase, but who is going to find the money, and how many more millions are to be collected from the unhappy tax-payer? The objections to a new bridge on the score both of traffic and of cost seem to me insuperable.

It has been announced that the new bridge will be a stone bridge and will span the river in five arches, and also that due care will be taken of its relation to Somerset House. I have had such a bridge set out, in order to see what the effect of a five-arch stone bridge would be. The total length from shore to shore is 1100 ft. Allow 25 ft. for each of the four piers (the existing piers are 20 ft.); this leaves for each arch a span of 200 ft. The maximum height possible from high-water level to the soffit of the arch is 27 ft. 6 in. The result would be a stone segmental arch of 200 ft. span with a maximum rise of about 30 ft. Such an arch in stone might stand by itself but could not carry any considerable load, as the joints over most of the centre

part would be nearly vertical. The arch would have to be secured to and carried by either a steel girder or a reinforced concrete arch at the back; an unsatisfactory form of construction which was deliberately rejected at Lambeth Bridge. Incidentally, such an arch would be very ugly and quite out of scale with Somerset House, and a good part of the navigable way would be lost, owing to the flatness of the arch. The alternative, and indeed the only sensible form of construction for an arch of this span and limited rise, is, of course, in steel, but then what becomes of Somerset House and the care for its relation to the bridge? A steel bridge here would mean the break-up and the irretrievable loss of what is the finest monumental composition in the world; and this is not the only difficulty in the way of a satisfactory design; for instance, there is the entrance to the tram-tunnel.

An attempt was made, by speakers in the House of Lords, to ride off the point by suggesting that there are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it. Of course there are, and given a free site, there are plenty of engineers and architects who could produce a satisfactory bridge. But this is not a free site. The design of the bridge is conditioned by Somerset House. The existing bridge makes a perfect composition with that building, in scale and treatment. If you alter the bridge you destroy that composition, and from the point of view of Architecture you might just as well ask an architect to substitute a series of shops and cafés for Bernini's colonnade in front of St. Peter's at Rome. Sir Frederick Palmer is an excellent engineer and Sir Giles Scott is a very clever architect, but neither they nor anyone else can make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, and the sow's ear would be the new bridge. The L.C.C. is a representative public body and as a general rule does its work admirably, but in this case it does not represent the public, but is forcing its hands. In the face of objections which have never been answered because they are unanswerable, a majority of the Council seems to be trying to coerce the public into agreeing to the sacrifice of a splendid possession at a cost which the country cannot afford, and at an intolerable inconvenience in regard to traffic.

What is the alternative? A very simple one; namely, to adopt the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Cross River Traffic to recondition the bridge and widen it to take four lines of traffic. In regard to the reconditioning, engineers of first-rate

authority on such work say that this can be done without difficulty and without danger at a cost of from £725,000 to £770,000, and what is perhaps even more convincing, two first-rate contractors, who are used to work of this magnitude, are prepared to do the work, one for £613,500, and the other for £676,000. The work can be done piece by piece without obstructing the traffic in the river or on the Embankment, and it would not be necessary to construct a second temporary bridge at all, as the bridge would not be closed to traffic. Traffic authorities are convinced that four lines would be ample for all the traffic that the approaches can take. This would avoid the necessity of altering the approaches, and the field would be left clear for that new bridge that must be made either near Charing Cross or the Temple.

It has now been suggested that the widening of the bridge 3 ft. 6 in. on each side by corbelling out, which is all that is necessary, would injure its appearance. I maintain that it would not, and I suggest that the large model of part of the bridge altered as I proposed, which was made for submission to the Royal Fine Arts Commission but never shown to them, should now be unearthed and exhibited to the public. At a distance the alteration would be hardly noticeable and it would preserve the arches, the cornice, the Doric columns, all the essential parts of the bridge, and more especially the fine archways on either side of the bridge on the north side. In my opinion, and in the opinion of all those who have signed the Memorial, to pull down the bridge and build a new one in its place of nearly double the width and an entirely different design, would be a deplorable and disastrous blunder.

We tax-payers look to the members of the Houses of Parliament to protect us from the imposition of burdens heavier than we can bear, and I venture to suggest that in the interest of the public they should look very closely into the scheme of a new bridge from the point of view of cost and traffic. Sixty per cent on a fixed amount known and stated beforehand is a very different thing from 60 per cent of a rather doubtful estimate of cost, with the practical certainty of 60 per cent on indefinite millions in the near future. Why not invite tenders for recon-ditioning and widening the existing bridge from responsible contractors used to this sort of work by the two methods proposed, viz. (1) by use of cofferdams, (2) by compressed air

chambers, which method has been used by Mr. Dalrymple Hay in the Tube Railways, and was used a few years back in underpinning the piers of the railway bridge at Bar in France, and as against this, ascertain from the L.C.C. their approximate estimate of cost of dealing with the approaches of their new bridge, and we shall then know where we are.

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